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Sociologist urges troubled couples to stay together

Alan Doerksen

ST. CATHARINES, Ont. – Some scholars and authors who focus on the effects of divorce on children disagree about what is best: for a troubled couple to break up, or to stay together for the sake of their children.

Sara McLanahan, a sociologist at Princeton University's Woodrow Wilson School, believes couples should stay together, even if their relationship has gone sour. "If you asserted everyone should stay together no matter what, it's clear that isn't correct," McLanahan told the *Globe and Mail* recently. "But I would say somewhere between two-thirds and three-quarters of the families who divorce should probably give it more time and more thought about whether they're doing the right thing."

Sara McLanahan

After reaching a peak in the 1980s, Canada's divorce rate in the early '90s hovered around 79,000 a year, reports the *Globe and Mail*. McLanahan would like to see a drop in the divorce rate, even if it means compromising the happiness of troubled parents. "The child would probably be better off if the parents resolved their differences and the family remained together, even if the long-term relationship between the parents was less than perfect," she asserts.

In a 1998 study, McLanahan found that the drop in income that usually accompanies a separation deals the first and hardest blow to children following divorce. No matter what their social status, mothers usually end up with the kids, and fathers get the biggest slice of the family income. McLanahan also believes divorce can undermine the learning process for kids, and impair academic and job success.

Better than a battle zone?

But Ashton Applewhite, author of the book *Cutting Loose* (HarperCollins), disagrees with McLanahan, and asserts that some kids are better off after their parents divorce. In *Cutting Loose*, she writes: "During the 1970s, the conventional wisdom that unhappily married parents should hang in there 'for the good of the children' yielded to a general acknowledgement that divorce is less stressful for families than life in a battle zone or an emotional freezer. Despite a recent nostalgia-driven lament for the days when Mom and Dad toughed it out, there is no evidence that the good old days were better for children, and considerable evidence to the contrary."

As evidence to back up her viewpoint, Applewhite refers to a study by Rosalind Barnett and Caryl Rivers which compared children raised in high-conflict families in which conflict led to divorce with children whose high-conflict families remained intact. According to Barnett and Rivers, "If children emerged from the trauma of divorce with a strong relation with a parent, they were better off than if they remained in an intact family in constant upheaval. [This] challenged the notion that divorce caused permanent and long-term damage to children."

Therefore, Applewhite contends that "though acutely attuned to the way in which their children have borne the brunt of divorce, the mothers in this study believe their children are better off now." She concludes: "Divorce releases many mothers from tension and depression. Happier, they are able to be more generous with their kids; calmer, they are more even-tempered; self-reliant, they provide better examples of how to make goals and live up to them."

Applewhite also refers to a 1995 study by McLanahan and Gary Sandefur called "Growing Up With a Single Parent," which concludes that children from single-parent homes fare less well at every stage of life.

"If children of divorce suffer psychological problems, it's usually because of the troubled family life that preceded the breakup, not the divorce itself," argues Applewhite. "Research seldom compares the effects of divorce to those of other major upheavals in family life."

Trend toward acceptance of divorce

In her book *The Divorce Culture* (Knopf, 1997), author Barbara Dafoe Whitehead outlines how North American attitudes about divorce's effects on children have changed over the past few decades. Historically, "concern for the well-being of children was a central reason for avoiding divorce," she writes. "Most Americans believed that divorce imposed such severe and sometimes lasting hardships on children that it should be

See DIVORCE page 2...

THE FAMILY TODAY

Does it look like it used to? Should it? (pp. 4, 12-22)

* *

It's the Thanksgiving season (pp. 10, 11)

South African church paper sponsors 'declaration of faith' for new millennium

JOHANNESBURG, S. Africa (REC) – The official paper of the Dutch Reformed Church in South Africa, *Die Kerkbode* ("Church Messenger"), wants South African theologians to get together and produce a "Declaration of Faith, 2000." The paper has started a process to create a document which will address numerous areas of belief and life, and which will stand as a testimony for years to come.

Die Kerkbode has asked 18 theologians from six Reformed denominations in South Africa to contribute their thoughts in specified areas. After some three months of public comment, the paper will finalize the document so that it can be published near the beginning of 2000.

The declaration will be divided into seven major sections. Each will contain a series of positive statements ("What We Believe"), followed by some denials ("What We Do Not Believe"). The opening headings are classical doctrinal headings: "The Bible"; "God: The Father, The Son, The Holy Spirit"; and "Humanity."

Emphasizing life's value

The sixth section is about humanity and the environment. It will declare that God is creator of all, while the earth will be described as our "mother." The declaration will also say that we human beings bear the imprint of our maker, and that neither gender, ethnicity, nor race are reason for mistreatment of others.

The seventh and most detailed section will cover "life." Here the document will emphasize the value of all life, of human stewardship over other life, and of mutual responsibility for each other's lives.

It will touch on technology and fertilization, approving efforts of childless couples to seek children, while condemning cloning. It will explicitly condemn abortion on demand and active euthanasia, and will reject calls for an unconditional end to capital punishment.

Die Kerkbode emphasizes that the declaration in its present, working form is provisional and not necessarily the position(s) of the paper's editors.

News

Divorce disruptive, traumatic for children

... *continued from page 1*
avoided except in marriages torn by violence or other severe abuses. Consequently, parents were enjoined to work out their differences (or at least conceal them) so that they could hold the marriage together 'for the sake of the children.'

Work it out

"This injunction was rooted in a tradition of thought about the social and moral bases of child nurture and well-being. It recognized marriage as society's chief institution for child-rearing and the most important source of social insurance for children.... The injunction that unhappily married parents should preserve the marriage for the sake of the children was also rooted in an ethical principle: the idea that parents have a duty and an obligation – to their children, to each other, and to the larger society – to place their children's needs above their own individual interests and even above their satisfaction with the spousal relationship.

COMSTOCK

"You are not responsible for your parents' breakdown in their marriage. They are," writes psychologist Danny Ng.

"This ethical principle also imposed an obligation on parents in a troubled marriage to work diligently to resolve their differences, not simply to 'save' the marriage but to improve it, for the children's sake."

But, Whitehead observes, "After the mid-1960s, this injunction lost support and credibility.... One clear sign of its waning influence was the change in women's opinion. In 1962, on the threshold of the divorce revolution, researchers asked women whether they agreed or disagreed with the statement that 'when there are children in the family, parents should stay together even if they don't get along.' Opinion was roughly divided, with 51 per cent of the women disagreeing. By 1977, when researchers posed the question again to the same sample of women, 80 per cent disagreed." The divided opinion had turned into a strong consensus against troubled couples staying together.

Now the pendulum has swung back once again. Whitehead acknowledges that divorce is very disruptive for affected children. "Divorce commonly initiates a string of disruptive events in children's family lives.... Changes in family household arrangements often involve residential moves, which in turn lead to changes in schools, neighborhoods and playmates." Besides this, divorce can plunge "children into a trough of family instability, increased economic vulnerability, and traumatic loss."

Great tragedy

Websites on the Internet posted by psychologists and family support groups reflect the pain that children of divorce often deal with. Psychologist Danny Ng, from Singapore, recently reflected this in an article for the Christian youth magazine *Phases*.

"Broken families are one of life's greatest tragedies," he writes. "Divorce hurts! It is the collapse of a God-intended design, the family nucleus. Children can get robbed of a special experience and protection called 'family.' They move on in their lives as individuals without the understanding of what familial security and bond is."

While condemning divorce, Ng acknowledges the guilt, shame, low self-esteem and other emotions that children of divorce often deal with. He offers them this advice: "You are not responsible for your parents' breakdown in their marriage. They are. Whatever stress they may have encountered because of you (assuming that this was true), it is still their responsibility to deal with it. If necessary, they should seek help."

On its website, the Canadian Child Care Federation addresses troubled parents: "Children are deeply affected when their parents break up, often displaying signs of bewilderment, emotional distress and regressive behaviour. Their pain and anxiety can be eased, however, if you take time to understand their feelings and help them adjust to the changes in their lives. Separation and divorce are hard on everyone, but if you are able to cope with the situation, your children will likely cope as well. Kids need more than a behavioral model, however. You must also give them reassurance, love and opportunities to communicate their feelings and concerns."

Turkish police arrest 40 Christians in Izmir
Group was harassed previously

Barbara G. Baker

ISTANBUL (Compass) — Turkish police, accompanied by the crew of a private TV channel, disrupted the worship services of an established Protestant church in Izmir on September 12, arresting 40 adults worshipping in what officials claimed was an "illegal" church. But according to the church's lawyer, Erdem Canitez, it was the police raid itself which was "contrary to established law."

Eyewitnesses said that some 20 intruders stormed into the Izmir Fellowship of Jesus Christ during a Sunday service. Half were plainclothes police, intermixed with reporters, photographers and camera operators from Star TV and its sister tabloid, also named *Star*. Arriving about 15 minutes after the morning service had begun, they walked up and down the aisles, filming the congregation singing hymns.

The security police then stopped the church service, taking into custody all the adults, as well as several teenagers under 18, and ordered them into two police buses parked outside. Two young mothers with infant children were allowed to leave, with eight minor children left to fend for themselves after their parents were taken away.

According to a 14-year-old Turkish Christian left behind, "It was my first time to see someone bring machine guns into a church."

Although 35 of those arrested were Turks, five were foreigners: one long-term American resident of Izmir, a Turkish-born Anglican priest of dual citizenship and his Australian wife, an unidentified Korean visitor, and a Bulgarian woman.

Several first-time visitors were arrested along with the congregation, including one unhappy passerby who had heard the singing from the street and entered out of curiosity.

Treated as criminals

Held for 24 hours, all 40 were kept at security police headquarters overnight for questioning at the Terrorism Bureau. "We were treated as criminal suspects," one said, "but I refused to state my 'crime' when asked, insisting that I had not committed any crime."

After giving and signing their official statements, all were photographed, fingerprinted and taken for a medical check, to confirm they had not been tortured while under arrest.

"We were not treated badly, although we were locked into two large cells overnight," one of the detainees told Compass. "The only time they yelled at us was when we started singing in the cells. So we had to tone things down, and just read Scripture and pray together quietly."

Police above the courts?

The next day, Public Prosecutor Ahmet Vural threw out the allegations, declaring that the church was meeting legally. Vural ordered the church's doors unsealed and the return of all the books, tapes and videos confiscated by the police.

Although the 35 Turks were discharged immediately, police stalled on releasing the five foreigners. In the Foreign Police section, the expatriates said security officers declared that they were above the decisions of the prosecutor and the courts. "It doesn't matter what they've decided," they reportedly remarked. "We can go ahead and deport you if we like."

Although at least two of the visiting tourists were required to sign a paper agreeing to leave Turkey, in the end all five with foreign passports were released. Two of the expatriates had official, long-term residence visas to live in the country.

According to Pastor Zekai Tanyar, his church had been subjected to a previous police investigation in September of last year. At that time, the public prosecutor had also issued a written statement verifying that the church had been meeting at its current premises legally.

"But this was ignored, and our freedom to meet was overridden," Tanyar declared in a open statement distributed to the Turkish press. "Unfortunately," the pastor said, "certain media groups in an effort to create 'sensational' news have opposed our beliefs in an aggressive and disrespectful manner." No newspapers made mention of Tanyar's statement.

On the Sunday evening news, Star TV aired an "exclusive" on the arrests over its national channel. The next morning, the daily *Star* devoted the entire third page to the trumped-up case. Calling the group a "pirate church," the paper claimed that they were meeting secretly and illegally, under the leadership of foreigners.

In a previous "expose" published September 9, *Star* had announced that "missionary priests" were running around the Izmir area brainwashing and baptizing Turkish young men, tempting them with offers to furnish them jobs and a wife.

The current chairperson of the Turkish Pastors Council said, "The police are violating in the most obvious way our freedom to worship," declared Ankara Pastor Ihsan Ozbek.

Ozbek said he did not believe that the persecution being aimed at the Turkish Protestant churches was organized or supported by the government. "But it is being carried out by local individuals, acting on their own caprice," he charged.

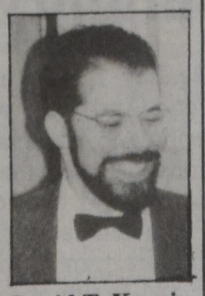
Helping others

Established more than 20 years ago as a Protestant congregation, the Izmir Fellowship had purchased its current premises in 1994. In previous years, it had met in the facilities of various other churches in the Aegean port city. According to Tanyar, the church now has a core of 50 members, with only two or three foreigners attending regularly. Sunday worship services can vary from 50 to 90 in attendance, he said.

Tanyar noted that in the wake of Turkey's devastating August 17 earthquake, he and the members of his church had spent the past few weeks in almost full-time relief work. "We are extremely sorry and offended to be treated as though we are not citizens of this country," he admitted.

Tremors of an unexpected kindness

Principalities & Powers



David T. Koyzis

During our visit four years ago to my father's native island of Cyprus, we were awakened one morning at 5:30 to the sound of wailing sirens. Unnerved to hear such an ominous noise in an already tense country, we later learned that it marked the exact time, 21 years earlier, that Turkish forces had landed on the north coast to launch their invasion of the island.

The events of 1974 played a large role in moving me towards the study of political science as a university undergraduate. I came to understand vividly that political events in distant corners of the globe could affect my loved ones in a direct way. After this point I could no longer see politics as a mere spectator sport to be followed from the comfort of my armchair.

Out of these events I came to abhor nationalism, particularly the ethnic variety. Both Greeks and Turks have been guilty of pursuing policies rooted in this destructive ideology.

'Great Idea'

In Cyprus it was primarily Greek nationalists who made it impossible for ethnic Greeks and Turks to live together in peace. Enamored of the 19th century hellenic nationalists' *Meghali Idhea* ("Great Idea"), they sought at least to bring Cyprus into an enlarged Greek kingdom, and at most to re-establish the ancient Byzantine Empire centred in Constantinople. But Greeks were not the only guilty party.

This past summer I read Marjorie Housepian's 1966 book, *The Smyrna Affair*, a compelling and grisly account of the destruction of the largely Christian city of Smyrna by the Turkish nationalist forces of Mustafa Kemal in 1922. Kemal sought to rescue his native country from the impending collapse and partition of the Ottoman Empire after its defeat in the First World War. He believed the best way to do this was by ensuring the new Turkish Republic's ethnic homogeneity, which necessitated his killing or expelling hundreds of thousands of ethnic Greeks and Armenians, whose ancestors had lived there for millennia before the arrival of the Turks from central Asia.

Reading this chilling narrative brought home again not so much the cruelty of the Turks as the ruthlessness of people in the grip of an ideology. If one's ideology teaches that true nationhood rests on ethnic, linguistic or religious homogeneity, then anyone standing in the way of this goal must be dispensed with.

Today both Turkey and Greece are much more homogeneous than they were a hundred years ago. Although Greeks and Turks had got along for centuries during the Ottoman era, the 1923 Treaty of Lausanne mandated the uprooting of nearly a million and a half people in what was euphemistically called a "population exchange." Not everyone fit into neat categories. Greek-speaking Muslims of Crete were "sent back" to Turkey, while Turkish-speaking Christians, known as *Karamanlides*, were deported to Greece.

Fast forward to 1999. Back-to-back earthquakes rock the regions of Istanbul and Athens. Following the initial Turkish tremor, Greek physicians rush to the scene to attend to the victims and to help with rescue efforts. Greece and Cyprus alike offer unexpected assistance to their neighbor and rival. Responding in kind, Turkish help is among the first to arrive after the Athens quake.

Could these unanticipated acts of kindness bring better relations between these normally bitter rivals? Could this, in turn, produce a solution to the longstanding Cyprus stalemate? I pray so, for the sake not only of my relatives, but of everyone there thirsting for justice and peace.

David T. Koyzis teaches political science at Redeemer College, Ancaster, Ontario.

Theologian Harvie Conn was popular culture expert

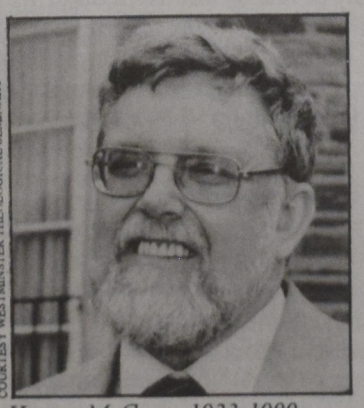
CC Staff

PHILADELPHIA, Pa. – Harvie M. Conn, professor emeritus of missions at Westminster Theological Seminary, Philadelphia, and author of several groundbreaking books on global urban missions, died on August 28 at the age of 66. Conn was born in Regina, Saskatchewan, and became an American citizen in 1957.

He received his BA from Calvin College, Grand Rapids, Michigan, and a BD and ThM from Westminster, where he later taught apologetics and missions from 1972. Before Conn went to Westminster he and his wife, Phyllis, were missionaries in Korea. Conn also taught New Testament at General Assembly Theological Seminary in Seoul, and carried on an evangelism ministry among pimps and prostitutes in that capital city of South Korea – and was once beaten on account of it.

Conn had a particular interest in popular culture and became an expert in interpreting it through comment on current films. In doing so, he applied fellow Westminster theologian and writer Cornelius Van Til's apologetics in new ways. For a time, he wrote a movie column in *Eternity* magazine.

From 1989 to this year Conn was editor of *Urban Mission*, a journal for urban ministry practitioners begun in 1983 by Roger Greenway, a one-time Westminster professor who is professor of world missiology at Calvin Theological Seminary.



COURTESY WESTMINSTER THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

Harvey M. Conn, 1933-1999

Defying stereotypes, evangelicals often have egalitarian marriages: study

CC FILES

Dr. James Dobson

PRINCETON, N.J. (EP) — Despite stereotypes, conservative evangelicals such as Southern Baptists often have fairly egalitarian marriages, according to a new study. Also contrary to popular conceptions, another study has found that while conservative evangelicals may be more likely to spank their children, they are also warmer and more loving than other parents.

The reports by researchers Bradford Wilcox and John Bartkowski are part of an ongoing study of evangelical family relations. Portions of the research have been published in the American Sociological Review and in The Responsive Community.

Evangelicals embrace conservative "family values," such as the recent Southern Baptist family statement declaring that wives should "graciously submit" to their husbands. But, in what Wilcox and Bartkowski call the "evangelical family paradox," in practice evangelical families confound expectations.

Hot rhetoric, warm families

"Evangelical family practice doesn't match evangelical family rhetoric," the researchers report in summer issue of The Responsive Community. "When it comes to the practice of family life, evangelical men and women act in ways that parallel or are in fact more communitarian than other North Americans."

Evangelical Christian couples are much like other families in such areas as division of household labor, family finances, child rearing and work decisions. Evangelical families differ from their secular counterparts in only two areas: they are more likely to say the husband takes the lead in "spiritual matters" and they are more likely to report high levels of marital satisfaction.

Language used by evangelicals to describe marital relationships has changed in recent years, they note. Today's evangelicals are likely to refer to husbands as "servant leaders" rather than emphasizing "headship." They "retain their allegiance to the symbolic authority of men even as they adopt behaviors more in keeping with the norms of their non-evangelical friends, neighbors and coworkers," the researchers say. "Moreover, it allows evangelicals to express – symbolically if not practically – their moral superiority over these very same non-evangelical friends, neighbors and co-workers."

Conservatives hug more

The researchers also conclude: "When it comes to parenting, evangelicals, especially evangelical men, are in many ways ... communitarian. The single exception to this pattern is that evangelical parents spank their toddlers and preschoolers more often than other parents."

At the same time, says the study, evangelicals also tend to display more warmth and affection for their children. "We find that evangelical mothers praise and hug their children more often than do other mothers. More surprisingly, we also find that evangelical fathers are more likely to practice this kind of expressive parenting.

"In fact, we find that evangelical fathers are more involved with their children than other fathers. They have dinner with their children and volunteer for youth activities like soccer and Scouts more than other fathers."

By isolating data on evangelicals from the National Survey of Families and Households, Wilcox found "theological conservatism is associated with a greater propensity to praise and hug one's preschool children very often." The data indicate that the more conservative people are theologically, the more likely they are to hug and praise their children.

Wilcox says it isn't membership in a conservative evangelical church that makes a difference, but identifying with the core religious ideology of such churches. He also credits the evangelical community's embrace of faith-based psychological and therapeutic ideas, such as those put forth by Dr. James Dobson of Focus on the Family.

Editorial

The sun of the Kingdom community outshines the family candle

Louis M. Tamminga

There once was a time, long, long ago that life apart from *family life* was unthinkable. People existed in and through their family connection. It provided shelter, nurture, safety, identity, companionship, instruction, training and meaning. Family members shared gathering, gleaning, hunting, planting, harvesting, preparing food, sewing clothes, learning skills, and a common morality. Of such families the father was the protector and bore the responsibility for leadership. Families formed clans, clans formed tribes. Life apart from communal life was intolerable. The family was, literally, the basic unit of society.

When *you* hear the word "family" what mental picture forms itself in your mind? You probably think of a father, mother and some children. Actually, only about one-third of the people on your street and even in your local church live in such a family connection. The other two-thirds live as one-parent families, couples-without-children, "reconstituted families" and single people: those never married, those divorced and widowed. And a growing segment of society lives in institutions, homes and prisons.

Church language in sermons and bulletin has traditionally been family-oriented. The same held for church activities. The church did that with the best of intentions. Healthy family life benefited both church and society. And there was ample biblical support for this approach, especially in the Old Testament. But we must be aware that in Israel the family served a greater good: that of the nation as a people of God. From that nation the Messiah was to be born. Whereas the family found safety in the strength and spiritual health of the nation, the family's great calling was to bless that nation and to contribute to its well-being.

Toward inclusivity

The same trend can be observed in the New Testament, but even more so. In the New Testament Christ, on the one hand, pointed to Genesis as the original blueprint for marriage and family (Matt. 5:31-32; 19:3-11; Mark 10:1-9; Eph. 5:32 - 6:4; Col. 3:20). On the other hand, Christ more often championed a higher loyalty: loyalty to the Kingdom of God, with its citizenry (Matt. 19:27-30; Mark 10:28-31; Luke 18:28-30).

The glory of the family lies in its support of the Kingdom. That's why the New Testament often speaks eloquently of another family: the family of heaven and earth, the household of God, the body of believers, the new humanity, the church as Christ's bride (2 Cor. 11:2; Eph. 2:19; 3:15; 5:25-33; Gal. 6:10; 1 Pet. 4:17; Rev. 19:9; 21:9). And for the sake of that new humanity Paul proposes that foregoing marriage can be a good choice (Luke 18:29,30; 1 Cor. 7:1-8, 32-35).

Isaiah saw some of these blessings from afar. He spoke of that despised class of people called eunuchs, totally barred from the temple service. Isaiah had a word of messianic hope for them: "...To the eunuchs who hold fast to my covenant, I will give within my temple a memorial and a name better than sons and daughters; I will give them an everlasting name that will not be cut off" (Is. 56:3-5). In the parable of the Great Banquet, Jesus said that the Kingdom will give a big place to the dispossessed: the homeless, the poor, the crippled, the blind and the lame (Luke 14:15-24).

The 1999 Christian Reformed Church Synod advised congregations: "Use language which assumes and describes the church community as the family of God. The church is a new community of Jesus Christ's followers, who are single, married, and from a variety of backgrounds. In other words, teach that the church is not simply a collection of biological families or parts of families. Because the church is a new community it needs to provide a home, a haven, for its members" (1999 *Acts of Synod*, p. 258).

The irony of family values

There is something ironic going on in our North American culture. In political circles a new phrase made its entrance: "family values." Candidates running for office quickly discovered that they must plead for healthy family life and good morals, if they want to garner votes. Who would not applaud such a noble trend? Who would not be grateful for this trend after 70 years of Communism's attacks on the family?

But the source of this trend is less than praiseworthy. We live in an evil day. Violence tears at the fabric of society. Instances of corruption, greed, shootings and crime are in the news daily. People feel threatened. So intuitively they seek refuge in that ancient bastion of safety: the home, the family. The trend extended itself into a related phenomenon: "cocooning" – a withdrawal into a private safe place.

Family not a goal in itself

Jesus said some radical things when talking about the Kingdom. He once said that his followers should strive for a righteousness that surpassed that of the Pharisees and the teachers of the law. Without it, he said, they could not enter the Kingdom (Matt. 5:20).

Christians know a righteousness that surpasses the righteousness of humanism's sudden excitement with "family values." Christians have rejoiced in the blessings of godly home life for generations. But Christians know that home and family are not goals in themselves. They are means to an end. Christian families, hand in hand with individual Christians of whatever station in life, make their own unique contribution to the Kingdom's healing ministry in society. Together, the citizens as a new community serve their Lord of the Kingdom. They, said Paul, are called to be one body of peace (Col. 3:15).

Within the family as a biological unit (to which adopted children may have been added) the husband and father bears the ultimate responsibility – the commitment to provide for those in his care (Eph. 5:22,23; Col. 3:18). But as one cell of many in the greater constellation of the Kingdom, he and his wife form a team guiding their children in the companionship of co-leadership (Eph. 5:25-31; 6:4; 1 Cor. 10:11,12; Col. 3:19). In such families children obey their parents (Col. 3:20, Eph. 6:2), to which Paul adds a promise: such obedience will benefit the whole earth (Eph. 6:3).

Hannah in the Old Testament saw this blessing from afar and so dedicated the young son she had so longed for to the temple service, even when that meant his growing up apart from her and the rest of his biological family (1 Sam. 1:27-28). And that's how Joseph flourished without a regular family (Gen. 39). And that's why it was tragically possible that Amnon, David's son, failed miserably within the safety of a family (2 Sam. 13).

And that's perhaps why the Lord Jesus had to caution Martha not to invest too much of herself in her home (Luke 10:38-42). That's why Anna appears not to have bewailed her widowhood, surrounded as she was by the temple service (Luke 2:36-38). And that's why Timothy remembered his mother and grandmother for their faith (2 Tim. 1:5).

This vision for the Christian family being part of a greater calling and community finds its ultimate fulfilment in the New Creation where there will be no marriage and family (Luke 20:27-38). The candle of the family is outshone by the sun of the Kingdom community.

Louis M. Tamminga is a retired Christian Reformed minister who served churches in both Canada and the U.S. He was on the staff of CR World Missions and served as the denomination's director of Pastor-Church Relations Services. He and his wife, Jean, are currently volunteers with World Missions and World Relief bringing pastoral care to their overseas personnel.

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Letters

Meet the younger generation's faith, lifestyle, and they'll read

Just wanted to let you know that I have been *totally* enjoying CC of late. There've been many more articles per issue that have challenged me to think through my theology and examine it in new ways. Thank you! I never thought I'd be grateful for the existence of this mag, and certainly not eager to read it. I want both to voice my appreciation for Harry der Nederlanden's editorial of July 26 and to respond to a few of his questions.

He asks: "Is CC's difficulty in getting younger readers a reflection on the malaise of these generations or an indication of CC's failings? Or are there larger social and cultural factors at work?"

I take issue first with his language – this (my) generation does not have a "malaise," nor does CC have any "failings." This generation has its own legitimate struggles, not an illness; and CC has its own personality, not faults. But if CC has falling subscription lists, then what I see happening is a mismatch between what CC has attempted to provide and what this generation seeks. Since I can only really speak for myself as a member of this "younger reader" generation, I can tell you that the reason I chose not to renew my subscription this year was that CC simply did not interest me.

It did not intrigue, challenge, pique, tweak or even mildly poke at my curiosity or interest. It just wasn't meeting me at the place where I questioned my lifestyle or my faith. It sounded to me like a paper that might be thought proper by my grandmother, but might be, even for her, a bit dull. So I'd say there aren't any "larger social and cultural factors at work." CC just wasn't where it was at.

Then Harry asks: "Is preserving Reformed traditions important? Or should we quietly melt away into North American evangelicalism?"

Things will last if they deserve to

My thoughts about this are that preserving anything, be it social niceties or dress codes or theologies, just for the sole sake of their preservation, is a pointless exercise. If something is believed to be functional, useful, insightful or even expedient, it will be preserved, whether it wants to be or not. We will expend energy to preserve those things that we value. Ways of seeing will always need to be reinterpreted by successive generations – I need to make my theology real for *me*.

This kind of reexamination is not a cheap or flippant exercise. If I don't make Reformed thinking part of my understanding of my world, which I will only do if I truly grapple with it and find it informative and real, why would I want to have it hanging around?

Next he asks: "What is unique and vital to the Reformed faith? What elements should be dropped or changed?"

Now here we have a great question, and this is the kind of thing I would like to see discussed over and over again in CC. What is unique and vital to this way of living? Faith is not an intellectual pursuit, it's a lifestyle. Sheepish as I am to admit it, I don't know how to answer this question: "What does it mean to be Reformed?"

People have told me that my theology is very Reformed, but all I know is: the theology I've been able to articulate is what I believe and is what I live. Figuring out where it falls on the Christian spectrum is not my forte!

So thanks for your questions, Harry; and if CC wants to get my subscription dollars for the next few years, it can continue with its latest trend of examining current life issues without any paternal advising or lamenting, and giving me lots to think about as writers present their ponderings on the complexities of living with integrity as (reforming) servants of Christ.

Deb DeJong
Langley, B.C.

Revisiting those repeating songs

After I wrote "What We Sing in Church These Days" (opinion piece in the CC issue on worship, May 31, 1999) I was surprised by the variety of reactions I received by phone, person-to-person, or via e-mail. Because of that I think I have some further explaining to do.

First about repetition. In retrospect, I think I referred not so much to repeats in songs as to repeats put upon the congregation by praise or worship leaders. A song such as "God is so good, God is so good, God is so good, he's so good to me," has much repetition in it, yet I like it and frequently sing and/or play it on my Nordheimer.

The problem arises when a worship leader has the congregation repeat the entire stanza of a praise song that was just sung, then has the chorus repeated again, and even for good measure sometimes the entire chorus once again; and that yet again often followed by a repeat of the last line. This may be truly uplifting to some, but I know of many, including myself, who find this a benumbing practice.

I think the problem may well lie in that the "praise leader" and/or group is all charged up and ready to praise the Lord repeatedly, forgetting that not everyone in the congregation is, or for that matter, can be, in that same frame of heart at that moment, and that for many, once is enough.

Strange threesome

Second, I need to say something about the literary quality of many of these now-a-days praise songs. Some years back I was given a pre-publishing trial copy of the Christian Reformed Church's then proposed new hymnal [the latest edition of which was published in 1987]. In that "sampler" was a song entitled "Thou Art a Wonderful God." It was to be sung to the tune of "Three Blind Mice." One does not have to be either a liturgical or musical specialist to see that singing a song of praise to our *Triune* God set to the tune of "*Three* Blind Mice" is not a great idea. Mercifully, also probably because of its archaic thees and thous, it was not included in the 1987 edition of the *Psalter Hymnal*.

Obviously the song had to meet a certain liturgical standard, which it failed. In an e-mail someone mentioned a Christian contemporary song entitled "The Love Jive." I don't know the song, but what a title! When we think for a moment about what all Christ came down to do for you and me, to transcribe that into a song called "The Love Jive" is awful. The question I raised in that worship issue of CC dealt with a lack of canon, a lack of standards against which these kinds of songs can be tested in the way it was done with the song I mentioned earlier. That question still stands.

No balancing act

I did not refer to any particular congregation or even denomination. These musical ditties have cropped up in most churches, from mainline to evangelical, including [Anglican, Catholic,] Mennonite, Baptist, Presbyterian and Christian Reformed. I had no slight in mind.

What I do feel sad about is that on many occasions there is a complete lack of balance between these kinds of songs and the rich musical heritage we all share. There is much concern often about keeping in tune with our youth (no pun intended) and therefore all must sing these songs; and then all too often psalms and hymns are totally left out of the picture.

Oh, make no mistake: I happily sing along with those "ditty" songs too. But sometimes I need a stronger, more substantial kind of musical food. And after all, don't I and people like me belong too? But perhaps we are not just talking about music. Perhaps we are talking about yet another example of how our shallow North American culture has been placing its stamp on so many aspects of our lives.

Still, I am comforted by the knowledge that when a God-fearing 83-three year old Alzheimers patient on his or her deathbed recalls a song from way back, it more likely will be the words and music of Psalm 42 than those of "The Love Jive."

Frank DeVries
Nanaimo, B.C.

For a quick Letter to the Editor, send e-mail to: cceditor@aol.com or fax to: (905) 682-8313.

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Meeting the goddess in the bowling alley

Campus Culture

Peter Schuurman

A student wandered into my study, probably looking for trouble. He had a fairly innocent question about the book of Job, but at some point in the conversation he suddenly declared, "I don't trust priests, because you can't trust a man who doesn't drink, f***, or fool around."

I was offended by his exclamation but proceeded to explain to him calmly that I wasn't a priest, and perhaps if he wanted a deeper understanding of the richness of a life of faith he might look into Jesus' first recorded miracle, and the Song of Songs, for starters.

He must have thought I was OK because he proceeded to tell me a little more about himself. He has two half-brothers, and the three of them have different mothers. His father has been dead for some time, and he misses his grandfather, the man who brought him up; or at least the man who was his legal guardian. I think that's where he got his opinion on priests.

I asked him what he believed in, and he said his religion was Discordianism. He invited me to check it out on the Internet. I found out that it is a joke-religion for hackers. It has no rules and declares that "every man, woman and child is their own pope." Its central figure is Eris, the Greek goddess of chaos (known as Discordia by the Romans).

Embracing chaos

Apparently this goddess appeared to two men in a bowling alley in the 1950s. She told them that humanity has restricted itself for too long and a new era is now dawning.

"I am chaos," she said to them. "I am the spirit with which your children and clowns laugh in happy anarchy. I am chaos. I am alive, and I tell you you are free."

Maybe you're laughing as you read this. Maybe you're incredulous. Well, I have some strong feelings about this particular student. For some unexplainable reason I feel he has a very special place in the heart of God. I wonder, too, if his life is not somehow a picture of the younger generation today: ignorant about religion, originating from a broken/blended family, and comfortably embracing chaos as a worldview. It doesn't sound very cheerful, I know, but maybe it fits for them.

The biblical concept of *shalom* comes to mind – that condition in which all relationships are in harmony: human to human, human to creation, and human to God. How can such a life be made real to someone whose world is saturated with discord? I don't think it possible. How can anyone believe in something they have so little experience of? It would take a miracle.

Yeah, a miracle. Spinning chaos into a bright new world....

Peter Schuurman is the Christian Reformed chaplain at Brock University in St. Catharines, Ontario.

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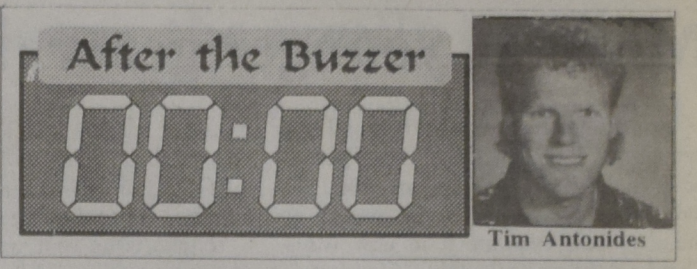
Techno-nuts



Tim Antonides

The National Football League (NFL) is surprising. It hands down memos on how shoes should be worn. It spends eons deciding which logo will appear on which player's cleats. It obsesses over appearances, yet it has developed an instant-replay system that makes its officials look ludicrous. The poor guys have to stick their heads under a curtain wrapped around a replay screen to see if they've made a mistake. When they do that, they look like hobgoblins; like anything but authority figures.

This is the inaugural year for the replay system. The pre-season didn't go too well. There is a push-button mechanism built in to allow coaches to alert the referees when they want to challenge a call. Unfortunately, things went a bit haywire at times. Coach Dick Vermeil of St. Louis, for example, kept setting off his little button every time he bent or twisted the wrong way. There were also those who found a way to cheat the system. Mike Shanahan, coach of the Denver Broncos, pushed the button in one game to challenge a call. While he waited for the officials to come over, his assistants upstairs informed him that the original call was correct. When the referees got to the sideline, Shanahan said the button had malfunctioned.

Long-time bedfellows

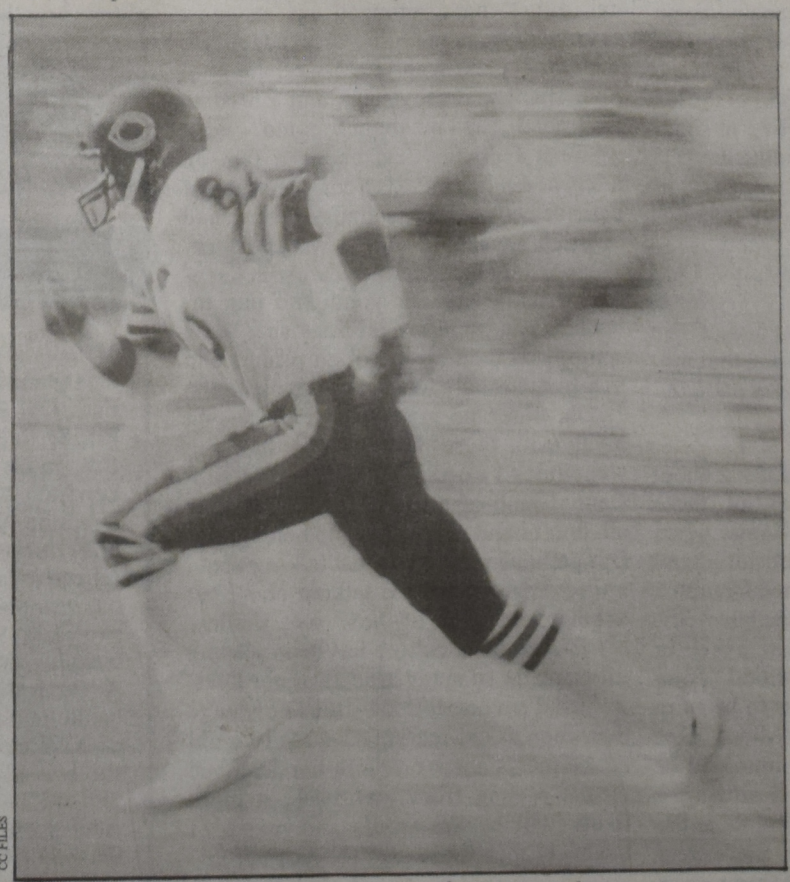
Technology and sports have always been bedfellows to some degree. Professional sports owes its proliferation and cultural stranglehold almost entirely to the progression of radio and television technology. As well, certain technological advancements have been injected into games to spruce them up and make them more entertaining. For example, what Canadian didn't smirk at the Fox Network's idea of making the hockey puck give off blue and red streaks so that Bubba Jimmy in Arkansas could find the dang thing?

They tried it so more people in the U.S. would watch hockey. When you watch a baseball game, it's standard fare now to be able to see a radar reading of the velocity of pitches. Standard, too, is the presence of the "Jumbotron," a huge scoreboard whose screen is larger than the playing field.

North Americans – in both Canada and the U.S. – are obsessive about technology. This is not a recent thing. Perhaps more recent, though, is the way in which the sporting world has gone techno-nuts. In our fascination with technological advancement, the bare-bones, grassroots, heartland ideals of sports can get shoved aside. It's sad. Sad, but inevitable.

Appetite for distractions

When he's not burning television sets, the author Neil Postman writes some pretty insightful stuff about technology. In *Amusing Ourselves to Death* he quotes Aldous Huxley's great line from *Brave New World Revisited*: "[Humankind] has failed to take into account its almost infinite appetite for distractions." How true. I don't know if you've experienced the following, but I have. You go to a professional hockey game (or baseball, or whatever) and somebody makes a great play. Immediately after, you automatically look up to the scoreboard for the replay. If it's not shown, you feel ripped off. Instead of enjoying the play for what it was, you're drawn to the distractions of technology.



CC FILES

Certain technological advancements have been injected into games to spruce them up and make them more entertaining.

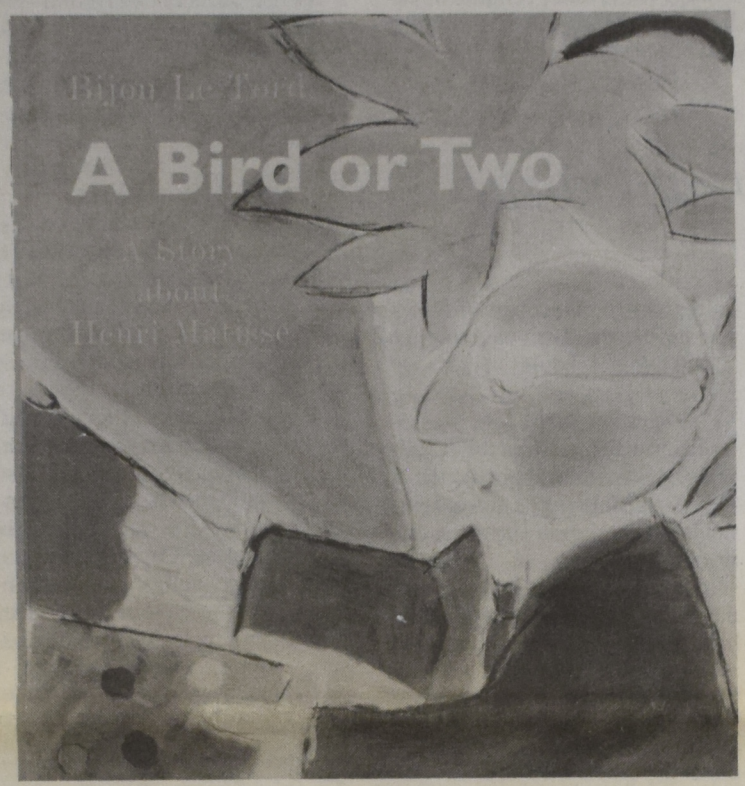
Technology is not necessarily bad for pro sports. Yet a great deal of so many people's time is wasted worrying about, and paying excessive attention to, the distractions that technology produces. Our God smiles on the beauty of the human body and the wizardry it can perform on the playing field, to be sure. Whether or not he appreciates an increasing reliance on technology to the point that the game becomes a subplot is not so certain. And how we spend our time is as much a stewardship issue as anything else.

Tim Antonides teaches Grade 5 at Surrey Christian School, Surrey, B.C.

Children's book

A Bird or Two: A Story About Henri Matisse

Written and illustrated by Bijou LeTord. *Grand Rapids, Mich.: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1999. ISBN 8-8028-5184-3. 32 pp., hardcover. $17 (US). Reviewed by Marian Van Til.*



This is a fine book for introducing young children to great art in general and to one particular great artist, Matisse.

It focuses especially on Matisse's use of color, and how artists can make things in the world around them "come alive."

LeTord's colorful and lively illustrations playfully hint at Matisse's style. LeTord's simple story gives a small glimpse into Matisse's life.

There's a helpful partial list of museums where you can see Henri Matisse's paintings, drawing, paper cutouts, and sculptures. The museums are in France, Canada, Sweden, Russia and the U.S.

A lovely gift your any budding young artist or art lover.

Licensing group lists top 25 praise songs

SAN JUAN CAPISTRANO, Calif. (EP) — Maranatha! Music is releasing an album of the 25 most popular praise and worship songs of 1999, based on data from Christian Copyright Licensing Inc. (CCLI), which has over 140,000 copyright license-holders around the world. Each church reports their song use to CCLI, which tracks the information to calculate royalty payments to songwriters.

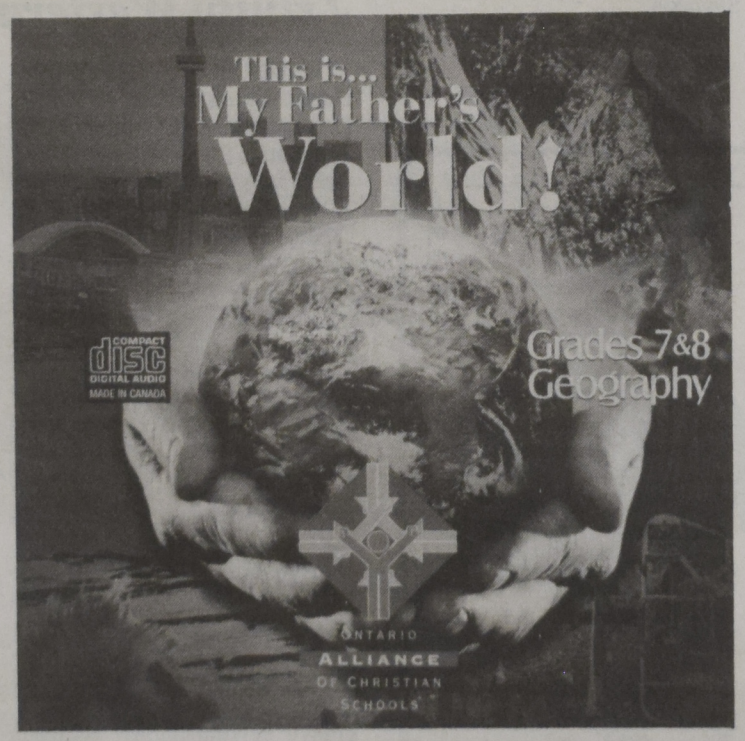
The album features seasoned worship leaders such as Terry Clark, Bill Batstone, Brent Helming, Kristina Hamilton, Angel Smythe and Todd Warren. Songwriters whose contributions made the top 25 include Rick Founds, Darlene Zschech, Jack Hayford, Rich Mullins, Graham Kendrick, Michael W. Smith and Twila Paris.

The top 25 songs are: "Lord, I Lift Your Name On High"; "As the Deer"; "He Has Made Me Glad (I Will Enter His Gates)"; "I Love You, Lord"; "Majesty"; "Give Thanks"; "Awesome God"; "Shout to the Lord"; "He is Exalted"; "Glorify Thy Name"; "We Bring The Sacrifice of Praise"; "All Hail, King Jesus"; "Change My Heart, O God"; "This Is The Day"; "More Precious Than Silver"; "O Magnify the Lord (I Will Call Upon the Lord)"; "Shine, Jesus, Shine"; "I Exalt Thee"; "How Majestic is Your Name"; "Great is the Lord"; "Open Our Eyes"; "Holy Ground"; "Celebrate Jesus"; "Jesus, Name Above All Names" and "Because He Lives."

OACS launches series of interactive geography CDs

Alan Doerksen

ANCASTER, Ont. – This fall, Grade 7 and 8 students at Ontario's Christian schools will be able to learn geography with the help of an interactive CD-ROM and Peedy the Parrot. Peedy is the computerized host of "This is ... My Father's World," a new series of interactive CDs recently created by the Ontario Alliance of Christian Schools.



Not in isolation

The first CD in a series of seven was sent out at the beginning of this school year to all Christian schools in Ontario connected with OACS, explains John Vanasselt, the agency's director of communications. He says the series is "unique in that it's an interactive program based on an existing curriculum." Educational CD programs produced by other agencies "stand in isolation" from curricula, he notes.

Each CD deals with one of the world's biomes. A biome is an ecological community which features one dominant type of vegetation, such as tundra or grasslands. The first CD is an introduction to biomes, explaining where they are and how they are interdependent.

The second one will deal with the coniferous forest biome, focussing on forestry, mining and education in northern Ontario. The third is called "Living in the Tundra," and will focus on the fragile environment of Alaska. The other CDs will focus on the deciduous forest, the rainforest, grasslands, and the Sahara Desert.

"The basic concept behind this is that computers and technology are a gift that God allows us to develop," explains Vanasselt. The CDs allow students to develop their computer skills, such as working with e-mail and the Internet, and interact with the CD program.

Some of the CD program's learning activities include the song "This is my Father's World," crossword puzzles, riddles and maps. The CD includes both individual exercises and group presentations. The character Peedy the Parrot acts as a computerized guide through the CD programs.

Previewers enthusiastic

"Our normal process is that each of our schools receive a copy," explains Vanasselt. "We're assuming all of our schools that have the software will use them. We're guesstimating that 60 per cent of our schools have the technology to use them."

Some teachers have had an advance look at the first interactive CD and "the result was very enthusiastic," reports Vanasselt. "The entire series of seven we hope to have in place at a rate of three per year." In two years, this series should be complete.

OACS has also sent CD samplers of the program to Christian schools in B.C. and Alberta, some of which regularly buy curriculum materials from OACS.

God's dynamic creation

Chris Van Donkelaar, a recent graduate of Redeemer College, is the "techie" who developed the new CD-ROM, says Vanasselt. The CD program comes under the umbrella of ACTS (Advanced Christian Teaching Services), which is how OACS refers to technological support for its curriculum.

"This is ... My Father's World" is also the name for OACS's Grade 7 and 8 geography curriculum. Some key points of the curriculum are:

– presenting each biome as a dynamic, unified creational structure;

– identifying the land use by people unique to that biome;

– presenting the student with a land-use situation that identifies different value/belief systems;

– guiding the student in forming questions that will allow them to make stewardly decisions about land-use situations.

Church

U.S. releases first report on world religious persecution

WASHINGTON, D.C. (EP) — The U.S. State Department released on September 9 a report on religious freedom around the world. The long-awaited report is the product of the 1998 International Religious Freedom Act mandated by the U.S. Congress and signed into law by President Clinton last October.

The Act requires the U.S. State Department to "assess and describe in the report the nature and extent of the violations of religious freedom in each foreign country, to describe U.S. actions and policies in support of religious freedom and to provide specified information on a variety of topics related to religious freedom."

The Annual Report on International Freedom for 1999 is the first of such reports. Information contained in the report was compiled by U.S. embassies around the world. In accordance with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights passed in 1949, the report affirms Article 18 of the Declaration: "Everyone has the right to freedom, conscience, and religion; this right includes freedom to change his [or her] religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship and observance."

"There's something very important that we cannot afford to lose in the pages of such a large report; it is the fate of millions of people throughout the world who are suffering because of their religious faith," said Robert Seiple, ambassador-at-large for international religious freedom. Seiple is a former president of World Vision, a Christian world relief organization. His ambassador-at-large position was created by the 1998 International Religious Freedom Act.

Covers 194 countries

The 1,000-page report covers the status of religious rights in 194 countries. Afghanistan, China, Iran, Iraq, Saudi Arabia and Sudan were singled out as countries that severely repress the religious freedoms of their citizens.

Part of the report's purpose is to identify countries that have the worst religious rights records. The report would then be used to determine future U.S. relations with those countries. Countries that do not respect religious freedom could face consequences from the U.S., from simple diplomatic pressure to sharp economic sanctions.

Critics of the report complain that although the report does a thorough job of reporting on specific examples of religious oppression, it does not provide the political muscle for the U.S. to act on these violations.

The report includes definitions of religious persecution, the difficulties of reporting persecution and the rights of religious minorities, then concludes on an optimistic note. "The number of electoral democracies has almost doubled over the past decade alone. The implementation and protection of human rights, no longer merely an academic subject, has become a core element of international relations."

It is assumed that countries with democratic governments will be more committed to preserving religious freedom than countries under totalitarian regimes.

Barriers to religious freedom cited include authoritarian attempts to control religious belief or practice, state hostility toward minority or non-approved religions, state neglect of religious discrimination and persecution, state policies restricting religion, and stigmatization of religions by classifying them as dangerous cults or sects.

Scripture distribution helps spread gospel in Central Europe

HERRIJUNGA, Sweden (EP) — The International Bible Society (IBS) reports that Bible and tract distribution in Central Europe is changing lives. Christian volunteers and pastors ministered to one million ethnic Muslims as they returned home to rebuild their shattered lives in Kosovo. During the onslaught of ethnic terrorism and subsequent NATO air strikes this spring, IBS and ministry partners throughout Central Europe were able to reach thousands through Bible and religious tract distribution.

Since the June 9 signing of the NATO Peace Accord, these efforts have continued through the distribution of disaster booklets, Bibles and coloring books for children.

Approved for schools

In the Czech Republic, IBS is working with the national government to continue providing contemporary Czech New Testaments as textbooks for teaching morals in public schools. For many years, IBS has provided Bibles for use in high school libraries. Czech educational authorities consider knowledge of the Bible necessary for the moral and civic development of citizens. According to Jiri Drejnar, IBS's national director in the Czech Republic, every high school student is taught basic Bible curriculum as part of his or her academic requirements for graduation.

To help equip teachers who themselves grew up in a largely atheistic society due to 50 years of communism, IBS sponsors seminars on how to teach biblical principles in the classroom and has published "How to Use the New Testament," a booklet especially for teachers. Since April 1998 more than 26,000 copies of Scripture have been distributed through Czech public schools.

'Wonderful book'

The Bulgarian Ministry of Culture and Education approved IBS's "My First Bible" as its official curriculum for religion classes in elementary schools. A Grade 4 student from Sofia said, "Every day I read this book ['My First Bible']. Many of my friends in school want to have this wonderful book too."

Other IBS Scripture ministry activities in Central Europe include the distribution of New Testament books to Hungarian Prison Fellowship Bible studies and the distribution of 36,000 copies of religious material to people in Slovakia.

Seminaries combine, yet maintain their perspectives at Trinity Western

LANGLEY, B.C. (TWU) – Don and Bunny Cook say they've found just what they need at ACTS Seminaries (the Associated Canadian Theological Schools), Trinity Western University's graduate school of theology. After 17 years leading a church in Seattle, the Cooks were weary and ready for a break. They wanted to find a theology school that would stimulate and refresh them, a learning environment that would bring them together with the greater Christian community.

After visiting several well-known seminaries in Canada and the U.S., they both chose the Master of Arts in Christian Studies program at ACTS. One of the great attractions was the concept of three denominational seminaries working together to offer their program.

Says Don Cook, "The co-operative denominational approach was a very attractive idea for us. We love being with other believers from the broader Christian community. It emphasizes the bigness of Christianity."

There were three schools which founded the theology school in 1989 with just 11 students: Northwest Baptist Seminary (Fellowship Baptist), Canadian Baptist Seminary (Conference Baptist) and Trinity Western Seminary (Evangelical Free). Two more have just joined: the Mennonite Brethren Biblical Seminary and the Canadian Theological Seminary (Christian and Missionary Alliance).

The combined resources of these institutions form one of the largest resource pools available to theology students on any one campus in Canada, says a TWU spokesperson. ACTS Seminaries has started this new academic year with 300 students.

"A centre of seminary excellence is emerging on our campus," says TWU's executive vice-president Guy Saffold, co-ordinator of the consortium, "where denominations pool educational resources with each other and our broader university, yet retain their defining perspectives. This approach benefits those who are seeking a vibrant learning environment, and also the churches and ministries they will go on to serve."

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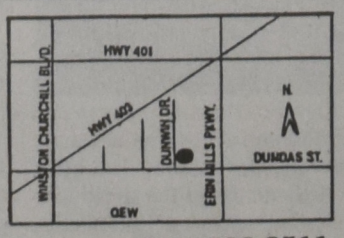

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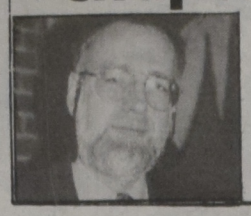
Receiving creation with thanksgiving

Chapter & Verse



• Al Wolters
Mary S. Hulst Antonides

"They forbid people to marry and order them to abstain from certain foods, which God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and know the truth. For everything God created is good, and nothing is to be rejected if it is received with thanksgiving, because it is consecrated by the word of God and prayer." (1 Tim 3:4-5, NIV.)

These words occur as part of a graphic description of a heresy which was to arise after apostolic times – a heresy which was characterized by the depreciation of God's good creation. There is good reason to believe that the heresy in question was Gnosticism, a powerful religious movement which arose in the second century after Christ.

It was characteristic of Gnostic teaching that the Creator God of the Old Testament was an evil deity, and that the creation which he produced was a bad place in which the spirits of humans were imprisoned, and from which they needed to be liberated.

Gnosticism, with its teaching of a fundamentally flawed creation, was one of the most serious threats to the Church in its early centuries. The apostle here arms the church against this heresy by insisting on the fundamentally *good* character of creation. In a kind of anti-Gnostic manifesto, Paul gives a ringing endorsement of the goodness of created reality – including such matters as marriage and various kinds of foods. Even though the world suffers under the effects of the Fall, it is nevertheless true that its basic goodness is still available to believers.

All for our enjoyment

It is striking how emphatically Paul makes this point. He makes the astonishing statement that marriage and various kinds of foods were specifically created by God to be received by believers. (In fact, two chapters later on, in 1 Timothy 6:17, he says that God "richly provides us with everything for *our enjoyment*.") And he goes on to say that *everything* God has created "is sanctified [I prefer that translation to the "consecrated" of the NIV] by the word of God and prayer."

Having said that, the Apostle then tells Timothy: "If you point these things out to the brothers, you will be a good minister of Christ Jesus" (verse 6). If Timothy wants to be a good minister (that is, servant) of Christ, he must bring home to the Christians under his charge that the goodness of all of creation is available to them. They are not to be ascetics who deny themselves the joys of the good things which God created, but they are to *enjoy* those good things as God's gifts.

Thanksgiving a key

But a key component of this enjoyment of God's good creation is thanksgiving. God created his good gifts to be "received with thanksgiving" (verse 3), and nothing is to be rejected if it is "received with thanksgiving" (verse 4). In other words, the goodness of creation is available only if we acknowledge that it is a gift from God's hand, that we owe him gratitude for providing us with so many creational gifts for our enjoyment.

When we think of thanksgiving in this season of the year, we tend to focus our thoughts especially on the abundance of the harvest which allows us to be well-fed. This is certainly an appropriate focus. After all, Paul himself in this passage specifically mentions foods among the created goods which we must receive with thanksgiving.

But he also teaches us that creational gifts include much more than food. For example, he also mentions marriage in this connection, the wonderful partnership of love between husband and wife which God wants believers to enjoy. But he goes much farther, and universalizes his anti-Gnostic point by saying that "*everything* God created is good, and *nothing* is to be rejected if it is received with thanksgiving." That includes not only foods and marriages, but also sleeping and playing, working and worshiping, feeling and imagining.

In fact, since the biblical idea of creation also includes societal institutions, we should give thanks also for such things as the state and the church, the family and the school, and all the normative activities associated with them. God made them all, and we should not shun any of these areas of his creation but receive them with thanksgiving.

Al Wolters teaches Bible and Greek at Redeemer College, Ancaster, Ontario. This year he would like to single out for special gratitude his marriage and his emotional life.

Churches in East Timor are loving their enemies

JAKARTA, Indonesia (Religion Today) – East Timorese churches are aiding refugees in West Timor. Parts of more than 100 East Timorese congregations have regrouped in West Timor and are helping other refugees in the territory, World Relief says. More than 200,000 East Timorese have fled to West Timor since pro-Jakarta militia began attacking Christians and independence-minded citizens last month.

The churches are providing clothes, food, medicine and tents to 1,000 refugees in three camps for 30 days. World Relief gave $10,000 to the effort, about half what is needed. "The fact that churches across Indonesia are providing the other half of what's needed for the program is remarkable given that Indonesia's economy has been near collapse," the organization's Ann Bergstrom said.

Church leaders put their lives at risk to deliver the aid, she said. "Some have prices on their heads and each day do not know if they will be returning home at night. Yet they continue their ministry." Denominations and churches involved in the program are being kept confidential for their safety, World Relief said.

WISE women call for greater role in British, Irish churches

LIVERPOOL, England (ENI) – An interdenominational women's synod has written to the heads of the churches in Britain and Ireland calling for women to be allowed half the places "on all decision-making committees and commissions."

More than 150 women met in Liverpool from July 24 to 28 for the first women's synod in the two countries. The WISE (from Wales, Ireland, Scotland and England) church women also seek the ordination of women priests in the Roman Catholic Church and of women bishops in the Anglican churches of Britain and Ireland. The letter to the church leaders urged them to "move from an ethos of obedience [for women] to an ethos of justice...."

Although the synod was not an official meeting of the churches (participants were not official delegates from their churches), it was acknowledged by the main ecumenical organization in the region, Churches Together in Britain and Ireland (CTBI), whose official for gender issues, Jean Mayland, attended the event. Mayland believes that the synod was particularly valuable for Catholic women; she saw the gathering as their "only voice," since the Catholic Church does not hold women's synods.

Myra Poole, a Roman Catholic nun and spokeswoman for the synod, asserted, "Women have no space in the Catholic Church, so we are taking this as an alternative. It is our public voice."

Deep contradiction

Poole says that allowing the fuller use of women's gifts in church comes down to a difference between "human obedience and obedience to the Holy Spirit." She contended there is "a deep contradiction" between the church's claims of authority and what she said is the Vatican II position that ultimately individuals must follow their own conscience.

Among the synod proposals were "the use of inclusive language in services and church documents"; "establishing accountable and transparent structures and decision-making processes in the churches"; "discerning and using all the gifts of women 'which can enrich the Christian community and further the mission of the church.'"

The WISE women's synod followed similar events in other European countries, which were inspired by the first European Women's Synod in 1996. The organizers hope to arrange another synod in Britain or Ireland within two years.

U.S. evangelical association to move from Chicago to Los Angeles

CAROL STREAM, Ill. (Religion Today) – The National Association of Evangelicals is moving from Carol Stream, Ill., to Azusa, Calif. On September 13 its board of directors voted to relocate. The move is strategic, says Kevin Mannoia, a bishop in the Free Methodist Church who was elected NAE president in March. He is attempting to reinvigorate the NAE, an umbrella group for 49 denominations, including the Christian Reformed Church in North America. Mannoia acknowledges that the NAE has lost influence in recent years.

Relocation to the Los Angeles area will give the NAE a more prominent national presence, along with its five-person policy office in Washington, D.C., Mannoia said. He hopes the move can help the largely white NAE work more closely with minorities, and play a larger role in transforming culture, including asserting influence on Hollywood.

"Some who talk about the NAE say it's flat on its back. One leader said he is surprised it is still around," Mannoia said. Yet, it "is in a position where it can have enormous influence." He said he is not sure yet how to turn the organization around, but is trusting God to lead the way. "All I have is a deeply rooted conviction that God is going before us."

The NAE plans to sell its $1.4 million, 24,000-square-foot facility in Illinois. That building also houses the headquarters of World Relief, NAE's relief and development agency, which has 52 employees.

Feed me, Christian, I'm a glutton for punishment

Jay Reay

Gluttony is all about enjoying something to excess. We picture a glutton as the Fatty Arbuckle character, centre-screen, in a silent movie restaurant, filling his sweating face with ropes of spaghetti, ragout dripping down his chin, greasy hands pawing the napkin stuffed in his collar.

But gluttony covers excess in *anything* – wine or work, shopping or sex. Indeed, as shopping has become the new sex (or is that gardening? or is it that sex has become the new cooking? – these new sociocultural developments are beyond me, I'm afraid), gluttony may not just mean ravenous consumption but also the conspicuous acquisition of more and more. And that is the real sin.

We say that a person is "a glutton for punishment" when we mean that she works too hard or he just can't say no. It's often a term of approval. And our society, if not we Christians, has a certain admiration for people who live life up to and above the hilt: the workaholic, the big player, the guy in the fast lane, even the hard-drinking office colleague or the Lothario who hops from bed to exotic bed (or says he does). Shakespeare, who surely knew human nature, understood this impulse. He had Julius Caesar say, "Give me men about me who are fat, sleek-headed, who sleep o' nights" and laugh with a rumble of a rolling belly. At the least, excessive indulgence in food is one fault most of us share. We hardly think of such "gluttony" as sin.

ILLUSTRATION BY HARRY DER NEDERLANDEN

YOUR SANDWICH, SIR? WAS THAT WITH A SESAME SEED BUN?

Stone the glutton!

We like to give the impression that we don't over-indulge. So if we indolently graze on snacks all day and far into the night, we also waste hours of time in mind-numbing exercise, and oodles of money in useless nostrums trying to look thin, dieting ourselves to get into last year's best dress or too tight Levis.

Gluttony gets a bad press in the Bible. Deuteronomy enjoins us to "stone the gluttonous man to death" (21:20), which is hardly how we would deal with ourselves or others for pigging out on too much of Aunt Jane's apple cobbler. Jesus refers to himself as being considered a glutton by the Pharisees (Luke 7.34) for joining in a wedding feast. Of course, he is sardonically accusing his tormentors of hypocrisy and double standards – they called John the Baptist mad ("he has a demon") when he deliberately starved (the NIV's word) and thirsted, and then tried to brand the Lord a glutton for his natural enjoyment of a celebratory meal.

There's the rub. Gluttony involves excess, and we all indulge in it from time to time. A wedding, or a landmark birthday party, or a house warming or farewell lunch, and particularly at Thanksgiving and Christmas: we eat too much, drink too much, and enjoy ourselves too well and not too wisely.

Where's the harm in it? we ask. It's just once a year. It's a family occasion. It's a celebration. Come on, enjoy yourself. Don't be a party-pooper – let your hair down. Have another slice of turkey, another piece of pie, another glass. Go on!

Behind beef mountain

I don't want to offend my transatlantic readers by accusing you of conspicuous consumption, but like many Europeans I am always amazed at the heroic portions served in American and Canadian restaurants and private homes. Some years ago on business in New York I skipped breakfast and worked through lunch. My body still on U.K. time, by mid-afternoon I was starving. As I was to be the guest speaker at a big dinner that evening, I just popped into a nearby restaurant on 5th Avenue for a bite to eat.

Aha! A hot beef sandwich – a quick snack to stem the pangs of hunger. North American readers, particularly those of Dutch extraction, may smile at my naivete. I have never seen so much beef on one plate: slice after thick, juicy slice of prime Hereford in a heap outweighing the Sunday joint I sometimes carve for my family of four. Capped by snowy mounds of mashed potato and moated by rich, glistening gravy in which ladles of garden peas swam. Somewhere in the foundations of this immense edifice were the slabs of scone-like bread which allowed this feast to masquerade as the convenient finger food named after the Earl of Sandwich. When the side salad arrived (a small vegetable plot on a plate) I nearly surrendered.

It was delicious, of course, but it ruined a fine dinner, itself of such proportions that I have no adjectives to do it justice. Is it any wonder that North Americans now exceed even Nordics in average size? But is such extravagance a good thing?

My old Granny was a superb cook of good, straightforward country food (no jokes, if you please, about British cooking, or I'll have to mention Canadian humor and American beer!). Granny's pink and succulent roast lamb, her herb dumplings, her leek and potato soup, her blackberry pie were exquisite. My mother inherited her mother's green fingers and culinary wizardry, but both women were slight of body and frugal of habit, with the appetites of birds. Gluttony just didn't figure in their lives at all (luckily I enjoy my father's genes).

Quality, not quantity

Granny and Mother had the habit of asking if we would like another helping of stew or another slice of cake, and as we held out our eager plates they would dampen our anticipation with, "Now's the time to stop," or "Always leave the table feeling a little hungry." Neither were in any way the miserly curmudgeon this might indicate; they just wanted us to eat well and not be greedy.

They were as generous at table as they were with their time and love, but they firmly believed that gluttony spoiled the enjoyment of a good meal. They knew that quality should never be confused with quantity. Unlike the Romans, who at the height of their pomp and power indulged in bouts of staggering gluttony.

While the hoi polloi (to mix my ancient languages) had to be content with bread and circuses, the rulers of the Republic would knock back enough food to floor herds of steers. An aristocratic party wasn't worth writing home about until one had taken a purgative to empty one's bloated gut in the vomitorium, staggered back to the banqueting couch and stuffed another lark's tongue pie down one's upper-crust gullet.

Mind you, the vomiting may not have to be forced when you feast on sea slugs, stuffed lamprey and the squidgy bits of fresh goat's brains (*cerebelli capra* should you wish to avoid it at your local Spartacus theme restaurant). Maybe that's why Caesar came, saw and conquered Britain. Our food may have been boring, but at least it didn't look you straight in the eye. (My apologies if you are reading this at breakfast or lunch.)

Indulgences

Apart from such appalling lack of good taste, gluttony is wasteful. One cannot indulge in too much without first buying too much to indulge in. And the effort entailed in buying more and more is killing us. "Drunkards and gluttons become poor" (Prov. 23.21) is a reminder that many of us throw our money away on fripperies as lightly as we toss down the second helping of meat and potatoes, another glass of wine, another favorite dessert. Worse perhaps, we also waste our lives in such getting and spending. "Do no wear yourself out to get rich; have the wisdom to show restraint" (Prov. 23.4).

Restraint is the antithesis of gluttony. If we were to eat less, drink less, indulge ourselves less in the things we like most, we would be better stewards of God's gifts, so say nothing of cultivating more refined appetites. Quality, not quantity. Comfort yourself with that as you decline that third slice of lark's tongue pie.

Jay Reay lives near Oxford, England, and is a knowledge management consultant.

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For what do we give thanks?

Marian Van Til

A Christian friend of mine truly surprised me the other day when he asserted to me that he doesn't believe God gives us *material* blessings. He has felt God at work in his life, and feels he has been given spiritual, and perhaps psychological blessings; but God wasn't around, materially speaking, when things were bad for him, he says; when business ventures went bad, when someone bilked him out of a lot of money, when he and his family became nearly destitute. He's doing well now financially, and on the verge of doing a whole lot better, and he has made his material comeback on his own, he firmly believes.

Trust me!

I protested, and suggested to him that the God-helps-those-who-help-themselves school of thought is not a biblical one. Of course, he disdains the "Gospel of prosperity" that has been popular for some time in North America, and especially American evangelicals and fundamentalists: as a result of your faith God will bless you with wealth. From his point of view the proof is in the pudding: it doesn't *work*; it's simply *not true*.

I disdain this "gospel" too. And it is no "good news," of course, for all the millions of Christians who "obey God rather than man" but are still in poverty; or even for those of us who are middle class and commit ourselves to a life of obedience to God and see no tangible material benefit to speak of.

I reminded my friend that when Jesus taught us to pray, he told us to ask (and it's really a demand, of sorts): *Give us this day our daily bread.* Surely that is evidence of God being concerned for our material needs. (And there are many more examples in Scripture, which I didn't have time to go into with him.)

My friend is adamant about his view that God was not concerned with his material needs when he was in trouble, and so he interprets Jesus as really meaning for us to pray: *Give me **the strength** to earn my daily bread.*

I'm pretty sure that many of us reading this paper feel we could marshal a lot of evidence to try to convince my friend he's wrong. But being objectively wrong or right is not really the problem here, for him or any of us. It's in the experience of life, and faith, where the rub comes. *He* admits that he's undoubtedly wrong, but thinks his faith is not strong enough to rely wholly on God for our "daily bread." He admits he's a person who likes – indeed needs – to be "in control" in most, if not all, areas of life. So to totally throw himself into God's hands in the way I believe God invites us to in Scripture (and perhaps even demands that we do — he says often enough: "Trust me!") is an unpalatable and perhaps slightly frightening thought for such a person.

My friend is not alone in this, I think. I *say* "all things come from God's fatherly hand," that he cares for us, in *every* way, moment by moment, so much so that "not a hair falls from our heads without the will of the Father," as the *Heidelberg Catechism* puts it. But that's an increasingly controversial notion among us, and makes age-old questions resurface. Where does that put us – and God – in very difficult times?

Ora et labora

I think what may be bothering my friend is how our own work and talents and initiative intersect with God's control of things. He hasn't quite figured out yet how to reconcile the Apostle Paul's *ora et labora (pray **and** work)*. And a lot of us don't entirely have that one "cased." But I don't think we need to rationally understand the ins and outs of providence and free will, of faith's relation to works, of prayer's relation to God's actions to allow ourselves to say: my life, all of it, spiritual, emotional *and* material is in God's hands.

This period between Thanksgiving Day in Canada (October 11), and Thanksgiving in the U.S. (November 25) seems an especially good time to consider these things. God's providential care of us (to the extent that we believe it and feel we experience it) can, and should, quite naturally elicit thanks. When young children pray they tend to "major in minors," one of the few instances in life when that's a good thing: they can go on and on and on, asking for blessings on all and sundry, but more often listing litanies of thanks: for butterflies, bumblebees, Bluenose the Bullfrog, Janie's striped guinea pig, Fred's nice sweater, Justin's new bike, the color orange, the family computer, their warm bed, that odd bug they found in the yard, and (while we cringe and wonder what God might be thinking) McDonald's hamburgers or the latest action toy.

They don't doubt for a second that all those things come from God, never mind that Mom or Dad have to pay for some of them. Perhaps those kids can teach us a lesson. Whatever our role in providing for ourselves, God enables it, and us. The Anglican liturgy (Rite 1), as a preface to the offering, says: "All things come of thee, and of thine own have we given thee." We teach our kids that, and they take it to heart. So should we. If we're thankful for minute things, it won't be hard to be thankful for mighty things; and if we're thankful *in* little, we'll find it easier to be thankful in much.

To Give What God hath Given Thee

Not here for high and holy things we render thanks to thee,
but for the common things of earth, the purple pageantry
of dawning and of dying days, the splendor of the sea,

the royal robes of autumn moors, the golden gates of spring,
the velvet of soft summer night, the silver glistering
of all the million million stars, the silent song they sing,

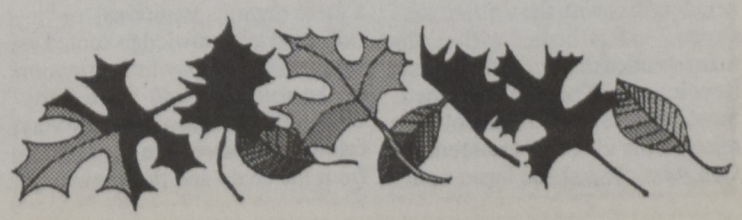
of faith and hope and love undimmed, undying still through death,
the resurrection of the world, what time there comes the breath
of dawn that rustles through the trees, and that clear voice that saith:

Awake, awake to love and work! The lark is in the sky,
the fields are wet with diamond dew, the worlds awake to cry
their blessings on the Lord of life, as he goes meekly by.

Come, let thy voice be one with theirs, shout with their shout of praise;
see how the giant sun soars up, great lord of years and days!
So let the love of Jesus come and set thy soul ablaze,

to give and give, and give again, what God hath given thee;
to spend thyself nor count the cost; to serve right gloriously
the God who gave all worlds that are, and all that are to be.

Geoffrey Anketel Studdert-Kennedy (1883-1929)



The Family

Is there really a 'war against the family'?

Blame it on the (French) Revolution

Harry der Nederlanden

In a hard-hitting book entitled *The War Against the Family* (1992), William Gairdner draws a vivid picture of numerous hostile forces aligned against the traditional family: the welfare state, educators, feminists, pro-choicers, New Agers, homosexual activists, modern-day gnostics, and liberal church leaders. He marshals an impressive array of studies and statistics to support his contention that the family is under siege, and that its enemies have been politically effective.

Violence during the French Revolution: Destruction of the Symbols of the Monarchy, Place de la Concorde, August 10, 1793 *(an oil painting on canvas by Pierre-Antoine Demachy; Musee Carnavalet, Paris).*

Strong case

Even if you take into account Gairdner's own strong slant, and believe only half of his statistics, his is a convincing indictment. *The War Against the Family* has rightfully become a bible for those defending "family values." No doubt some of the strength of Gairdner's case comes from ignoring all evidence that does not support his thesis. He works like a prosecutor, piling up the evidence with one goal in mind.

Readers of this book will be left with no doubts that several outspoken groups of activists have indeed targeted the traditional family. Gairdner, however, leaves no room for subtle differences. It is easy, for example, to come away from the book with the impression that all feminists and all homosexuals have evil designs on the family unit. There's no denying that many groups today do believe the family to be an antiquated, repressive and violent structure. There is, however, a big difference between seeking to do away with the family entirely and seeking to reform it.

Reverberation from the Revolution

Many CC readers will have some acquaintance with the work of Groen van Prinsterer and Abraham Kuyper in the Netherlands. The process of leveling that Gairdner identifies with the welfare state Groen identified with the many-headed dragon of the French Revolution. The "enlightened" minds that inspired the Revolution rejected the idea of a transcendent God who created the basic structures of family, church and state. They believed humanity could happily tear down all that had been built up over thousands of years and build it up again (in three days, as it were) according to the blueprint of Reason – a Reason freed at last from the darkness of priestly authority and religious superstition. The new edifice erected on the ruins would bring greater freedom, happiness and camaraderie to all members of society.

The worldview of the French Revolution plays off the sovereignty of God against the responsibility of humanity. To take responsibility for how we live together in society and state, we must refuse to be led by any authority outside our own reason. This reason came to its clearest, most reliable expression in science.

In the past, however, parents have always brought up their children not by methods supplied by social scientists but by a practical, holistic sort of knowledge picked up from their own parents. This is a more organic, traditional, or "local" kind of knowledge rooted in authorities who pay little attention to the scientists and the experts. This kind of knowledge is very fragile. Remove one generation from the chain and the knowledge lost is very difficult to recover. Even when it is recovered, it has undergone a transformation. It returns almost as a museum piece from a different era.

Every traditional society that has come into contact with the scientific culture of the West has felt the corrosive effect of the revolutionary worldview. The family and sexual life, however, were two areas that had been left largely intact until the middle of this century. The "war on the family" that Gairdner describes can thus be seen as the latter stages of a long historical process in which the Enlightenment mind of the French Revolution has gradually extended its dominion over every area of our lives.

Historians and sociologists have called this the process of *modernization*. It used to be equated with progress, but of late more and more thinkers are asking whether we can truly say that what modernity has brought is better than what went before. Certainly, they see that science and technology have also destroyed a great deal.

Spiritual forces at work

When put in this context, the so-called "war against the family" can be seen less as a conspiracy by the government and certain minority groups against the Christian family than as a product of spiritual forces working in history. I say "spiritual" rather than demonic forces for a good reason. To say that *all* those forces driving modernization or *all* the forces that undermine traditional social order are evil would be dead wrong.

Challenging tradition

Tradition is hardly an infallible standard. Some aspects of the "traditional" family need to be changed, as we have moved from an agricultural to an industrial and now to a knowledge-based society. There's nothing in Scripture that says the husband must be the breadwinner and the wife must do the dishes and change the diapers.

Gairdner would, I'm sure, agree. But his treatment of the forces tugging at the traditional family in terms of the imagery of "war" suggests, first, that all these negative forces come from the outside, and second, that they are all negative.

Many of the things that hurt our families most come from inside us, and we can do something about them. One of the negative things may well be that men cling to a dogmatic idea about what a traditional family should be and fail to adjust to extra demands made upon wives and mothers. Not everything that modernity and enlightenment has produced is bad. Sometimes God corrects his people from the outside, and often he speaks to them from the margins. Historical change cannot be neatly separated out into different threads, ours all good and the others all bad. Woven into modernity are threads that derive from the Reformation, from Roman Catholicism, from Judaism and a host of less influential threads and fibers.

No substitute for self-examination

We can appreciate Gairdner's clear and spirited defense of the family in itself, but such defense must not serve as a substitute for self-examination. Once we begin to thoughtfully and responsibly transform that fund of wisdom we inherit from our parents, we are no longer merely products of a tradition. We then distance ourselves from our own precious traditions and allow them to be judged in the light of an inspired Tradition. And the result of that questioning is not the same for everyone.

There is some truth in Gairdner's tension between tradition and the science ideal that he identifies with the welfare state. For the latter, the norm for the family is set not by tradition but by experts, by social scientists.

Christian parents can be intimidated or seduced by the advice of so-called experts, just as easily as anyone else can. Such parents may be tempted to surrender their own practical good sense to the dogmas of the latest "scientific" findings. This is not meant to denigrate the good services of Christian psychologists, therapists and social workers. These professionals are only all too aware of the limits of scientific knowledge.

There is no science that gives us expert knowledge of the person as an integral being. Such knowledge comes from practical life, from mutual service in a context of faith, hope and love, and ultimately from the faith that we are known by God in Jesus Christ our brother, our friend and our master.

Book Review

The family around the sink

The Family at Work: Building Strong Relationships at Home.

James R. Kok.

Grand Rapids, Mich.: CRC Publications, 1999. ISBN 1-56212-398-4, softcover. $10.80 (Cdn), $7.45 (US).

Harry der Nederlanden

The title of James Kok's booklet on "building strong relationships at home," *The Family at Work*, may give the impression that this is a dry workman-like book. It isn't. It is warm, personal, and down to earth. Each chapter is a short essay that reflects very concretely on some facet of our lives together as members of families. The Word of God hovers over the writing, but not like a stern schoolmaster with a ruler.

Kok embodies in his words what the Psalmist says about the Word: that it is a delight and a counsellor. It is true that the path we are called to follow can be narrow, difficult and sometimes steep, but it is also true that "the path of the righteous is like the first gleam of dawn, shining ever brighter till the first light of day" (Prov. 4:18). In Kok's brief but wise book we are drawn forward by this light.

I can think of no better way to review this book than to let you sample one of its chapters. Every chapter is followed by a section that sends us to Scripture passages for further reflection with questions to guide us. A second section gives questions to prompt us to examine our personal lives in the light of God's Word.

James R. Kok is director of Care Ministry at the Crystal Cathedral, and the author of *90% of Helping Is Just Showing Up*, and *Waiting for Morning: Seeking God in our Suffering*. He served as a pastor in the Christian Reformed Church for 35 years, specializing in training others in caring and counselling.

Who can clean a dirty sink?

Almost everybody resists change. But just the fact that change upsets us and evokes unsettled feelings does not mean the new way is wrong. Growth requires giving up old ways and entering a period of discomfort before improvement emerges.

The Spirit of God never stops leading us onward and upward. New plateaus serve as launching places for further advances. Trust in God's faithfulness encourages us to venture into life's exciting uncharted territories.

I will never forget the moment a new microchip clicked into place in my brain. I had entered our tiny green bathroom, but my hands cringed at the dirtiness of the wash basin where forty filthy little fingers had made their offerings. As I exited, a flash of fresh insight electrified my system: "*I can clean that sink!*" Modern couples may gasp with disbelief that anyone would require a revelation for something so obvious.

Other role-modifying experiences had already challenged me "Change the baby's diaper" and "It's your turn to get up with baby." But those came from my wife and always felt like temporary assistance with hard tasks that really belonged to her.

My conversion in the green room snapped something. A wall crumbled that day. Dirty sinks were suddenly *our* project whereas before they had been Linda's alone. Of course, I was not totally remodeled on the spot. My mind changed. But behavior waddles reluctantly along, trying to catch up with the brain.

Although young Christians marrying in the '80s and '90s have embraced marital mutuality, some traditional division of labor endures in their homes too: he changes the car's oil, she handles the wash. But more and more young people tackle tasks together rather than falling back on old patterns of "woman's work" or "man's work."

Not long ago I enjoyed sleeping overnight in the home of our son and his wife. As I dressed for my speaking engagement, I found my shirt badly crunched from eight hours in a garment bag. Instinctively I said to daughter-in-law Carol, "Would you mind pressing my shirt a little? It's awfully wrinkled." Before she could answer, my son said, "Here. I'll do it, Dad." I gulped with enlightened chagrin. (The next step forward calls for me to iron it myself.)

The generation gap deepened that day. He irons all his own shirts, I learned, as she pursues her education and works as a field geologist. I contemplated whether or not to bring this story home to my hard-working schoolteacher wife. We follow rather traditional patterns when it comes to the ironing board.

My meager progress toward mutuality embarrasses me. I now grocery shop and prepare a major meal or two each week, but old habits prevail. Nevertheless I strongly believe in, and teach, division of labor along the lines of skill, interest, and availability – not tradition – to young folks contemplating matrimony. This, I am convinced, is God's script for modern Christians.

Christian marriage prospers when husband and wife love the other as themselves – when they look for opportunities to encourage growth and development in each other. One is not to shrink while his or her partner expands. Each seeks the delicate balance of giving and receiving, serving and being served, as both find ways to use their talents and carry their share of the load.

In marriages of mutuality, household tasks are, when physically possible, shared. In my marriage some of this mutuality has evolved, even though it's contrary to the roles we saw modeled in the homes in which we grew up. For example, for most of our thirty years, Linda, a more careful and thrifty person than I, has balanced our checkbook. Giving up the macho power of managing our money threatened me at first. But soon good sense prevailed. My masculinity fragmented temporarily, but our financial affairs firmed up. Now we're both happy.

In ages past, each day served up ample satisfying work for husband and wife. He worked the farm or the factory. She easily filled the daylight hours with shopping, cleaning, cooking and childcare. Both owned clearly defined roles. Education and the simplification of home chores eventually modified that neat arrangement. Many young women crave broader intellectual challenges and the opportunities to earn and handle marketplace challenges. Young men increasingly covet the personal satisfactions of childcare and culinary craftsmanship. Happily, more now plot and plan for their roles to be interchangeable.

Although some of today's Christian youth maintain remnants of traditional headship patterns, many young Christian couples today put little stress on head-of-the-house issues. They prefer instead, and practice well, shared headship. Each, in his or her own way, endeavors to be a helper, nurturer, advocate, mediator, colleague, and facilitator. One looks out for the good of the other. Instead of waxing nostalgic for the good old days of strong family values, we might better take inventory of what is really going on. A majority of contemporary Christian homes are vibrant centers of teamwork modeling superior moral health and value-laden vitality. Many surpass in excellence the families from which they have sprung. Some of us can take lessons from our children while congratulating ourselves that they operate so smartly.

***Chapter 3 from* Family at Work.**

The Family

Gender roles and the modern Christian family

Marian Van Til

When we talk about the family, discussing gender roles seems inescapable. God having created us social beings, we grow up seeing our parents (or for some of us, one parent or some other guardian), our siblings (if we have them), other relatives, neighbors, schoolmates, church members – everyone — acting in certain ways which we come to associate with being male and being female. Conceptions of what is male and what is female behavior, body language, mannerisms are so deep that we immediately notice, if not react to, a man who is "effeminate," a woman who is "masculine" or a person whose androgynous look doesn't allow us to be sure whether they are male or female. Each of us picks up from birth (both overtly and unconsciously) lessons about how to be male or female and what is "required" of us as either a male or a female, both in "acting" male or female, and in carrying out certain societal and familial roles.

Those male and female societal and familial roles have changed a great deal in the last decades. And the repercussions still make some of us uneasy. When some people envision "family values" they think of (returning to) the "values" of a nuclear family in which there are, or were, very specific gender roles: a head-of-the-household husband who earns a living outside the home, in the "public sphere," and in a traditionally masculine occupation; and a stay-at-home wife, who works to raise their children in the "private sphere" of the home. That embodies the "traditional family."

While few of us would any longer see the family in quite such stark terms and embodying the doctrine of the separate spheres for men and women, some of us may still be leery about the new roles for women – and for men.

Confidence shaken

Social psychologist Mary Stewart Van Leeuwen wrote a book, *Gender and Grace*, now nearly 10 years ago, which examined from out of a biblical worldview issues of gender, male and female roles in relation to each other, their families, the church and the world.

Dr. Stewart Van Leeuwen is now taking a sabbatical from teaching at Eastern College near Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, to work on a book about masculinity and men's roles. It will be called *My Brother's Keeper: Masculinity in a New Millenium* (and is to be published by InterVarsityPress). On these issues I have found her solidly biblical approach, combined with keen insight and thorough scholarhip, to be helpful in sorting out how we Christians can be better and more whole (psychically and spiritually) men and women in this world. She spoke to CC recently about her book-in-progress and gender issues as they relate to the family.

There is a "crisis in masculinity" which has arisen as women's roles have changed dramatically and have moved from the private sphere back to the public. That crisis is not just the result of the recent women's movement. It has been nearly a century in coming. Before the Industrial Revolution in the 19th century society was shifting from a largely rural, agrarian and small-business society toward an urban, corporate one.

COURTESY MARIAN VAN TIL

Male/female roles have changed dramatically since this couple got married.

In the 19th century, Van Leeuwen notes, "the norm of every man owning his own land or small business was eclipsed by corporate capitalism and the steady increase in the number of men working for wages in large factory and business enterprises owned by a minority of elite males."

That shook the confidence of many men. If a man couldn't be an independent owner of land or a business, was he still really a *man*? And what about the toll on manhood that anonymity in corporate, urban life took? Some Christian revival movements, such as the Men and Religion Forward Movement (1908-1912), addressed these issues. They answered that "men could be men as long as they were breadwinners and protectors of home and nation."

To complete the picture, men were urged to assert themselves in the church once again, taking it back from its dominance by women (as the main churchgoers), and transforming their faith into a kind of "muscular Christianity" – not entirely unlike what the evangelical Promise Keepers men's movement suggests today.

Public vs. private

"The doctrine of separate spheres for men and women was the social ideal. Women were to be 'angels of the home' – as well as being the religious specialists, aided by an elite of male clergy, though men developed a strong, parallel quasi-religious space in lodges and secret organizations, such as the Masons. Men were mainly to be 'captains of commerce' (and politics, and intellectual life), their public competitiveness restrained by the private virtue and innocence of their wives and children."

The "traditional family" is not so traditional after all. Throughout the Middle Ages and up to the Industrial Revolution, families worked together as entities. Husbands and wives knew and observed each other's work. A man didn't go off to work somewhere (normally) as a man might today to a corporate office and do work of which his wife knows little or nothing, and may have business associates who his wife doesn't know. A woman didn't do domestic work that a man knew nothing of, or did not understand the importance of.

Van Leeuwen points out that this model of manhood "endured until women challenged the doctrines of male headship and separate spheres with the second wave of feminism in the 1960s, according to which not even provision, protection and the pastorate were to remain the exclusive domains of men."

Van Leeuwen does not view either masculinity or femininity as "an unchanging biological or metaphysical essence." Nor does she see it, either, as a "completely arbitrary social construction (as postmodernists do).

Van Leeuwen points out that "intellectual and social differences between boys and girls are small and getting smaller," with, in fact, *physical aggression* as "the most enduring difference" between boys and girls. "Stereotypic differences do tend to get inflated in the period covering courtship, marriage, and the rearing of young children," she admits, "but even here many changes are taking place as men become more involved in child care and women in waged work."

From a biblical perspective she can say: "Cultural masculinity, like femininity, both builds on and transcends the limits of sexual biology, enabling men and women to fulfill God's cultural mandate to exercise accountable dominion and the nurturing of successive generations in a wide variety of times and places, and in an appropriately wide variety of ways."

Many roles open

Thus, men and women have a huge range of roles open to them in the public sphere, according to their gifts and talents, and their roles within the home can be equally diverse – and perhaps quite opposite of what their parents' or grandparents' roles might have been. Is a husband a good cook? Is a wife good with numbers? Let them work out an arrangement which involves him cooking and her balancing their chequebooks. Does he prefer indoor activity and she like to be out in wind and sun? Then let him do the laundry and her mow the lawn.

The only way in which this variety is limited, says Van Leeuwen, is "by norms God has given for the protection and flourishing of all, including heterosexual monogamy, chaste singleness, restrained acquisitiveness, and care for the creation and other people."

Bible stresses *humanity*

It is of course helpful to study masculinity and femininity, and to consider how these are, at least in part, socially constructed. (Social historians identify, for example, five distinct "male ideals" from ca. 800 B.C. through the 19th century, and there are equally identifiable "feminine ideals"– and the ideals for both sexes have caused a great deal of confusion for Christian men and women, if not for others as well). But the core message of the Bible (creation, fall, redemption) mainly addresses us a "generic human beings," she asserts.

"The Bible both expects and permits changing gender norms with changing cultural, historical and economic challenges, in keeping with the broad freedom granted by God to humans when they were given the cultural mandate."

"However, certain creation norms transcend time, as we see men constantly being reminded about the need for sexual discipline, responsible family life, the false promise of material gain, and the right use of power in the service of justice and care for the weak."

CC FILES

Mary Stewart Van Leeuwen

Van Leeuwen argues (and intends to elaborate on this in her book) that "male headship" should not be latched onto by biblical Christians as an "unchanging theme." Rather, she says, "If the previously mentioned norms are taken seriously, the question of male headship versus gender equality becomes, to a large degree, functionally irrelevant."

It is the dismantling of the doctrine of separate spheres for men and women which has occurred in the last decades that is in many ways a return to an earlier, more truly "traditional" model of family life, "in which work place, dwelling space, and child-rearing space were more closely combined for both sexes."

"The long-term challenge," says Van Leeuwen, "is not so much the battle of sex-roles, but that of making sure that family life can maintain its proper integrity and not be swallowed up by the dictates of the market, the forces of political correctness, or even the church."

The family at school

Shaun Vos

What life decisions do young singles face and how do they make these decisions? How can spouses communicate and manage their conflicts effectively? How do couples adjust to having their first child or to not being able to have children? What can parents do to teach children about their sexuality and about dating relationships?

Did you find answers to these kinds of questions when you were a teenager? This fall, "Families in Canadian Society," a senior level high school course, is addressing them in many Christian high schools across Ontario. And it's a good thing that they do! Western culture is in turmoil about families.

Perhaps you would have benefitted from learning about how families function, or you would have found it helpful to examine issues that relate to newly married couples, teenagers or senior citizens.

Would you have liked to develop skills to help you as a family member, spouse or parent in each of the life stages? Family theories, life-stage issues and relationship skills – these are the things that students enrolled in "Families in Canadian Society" will be learning this fall.

No two the same

As a starting point for their study of the family, the first thing that students need to recognize is that all families function differently. Having students make family sculptures illustrates this clearly. How does one design a family sculpture? First, as a homework assignment, students make drawings or diagrams which indicate the kinds of relationships that are present in their families. They use figures to represent each family member, labeling them only with their gender and age. (To keep the sculptures anonymous, no names are given.) They position the members to show relationships of closeness or distance. Using symbols, lines or words they show the kinds of emotional connections between the members (affection, anger, tension), the posture of each individual, and their facial expressions.

The next day, students move all the desks to the sides of the room and then, using the anonymous sculpture maps, selected "sculptors" position their classmates into various family formations.

The class sees a father standing far removed from his children; a teenaged girl with her back to the family, her head in her hands; two brothers very close; a mother closer to her children than her spouse; a husband crying, facing his wife's outstretched arms.

In seeing these families, the students discover something important: each family contains different kinds of relationships and each family is flawed – a realization that comes as a surprise to many. All recognize too, that the sculptures would have been different had they been designed four years earlier, or if a different family member had drawn up the blueprints.

Our conclusion: although we are growing or grew up in a family, we are not experts on families. We are only experts on our experience of our family.

Repercussions

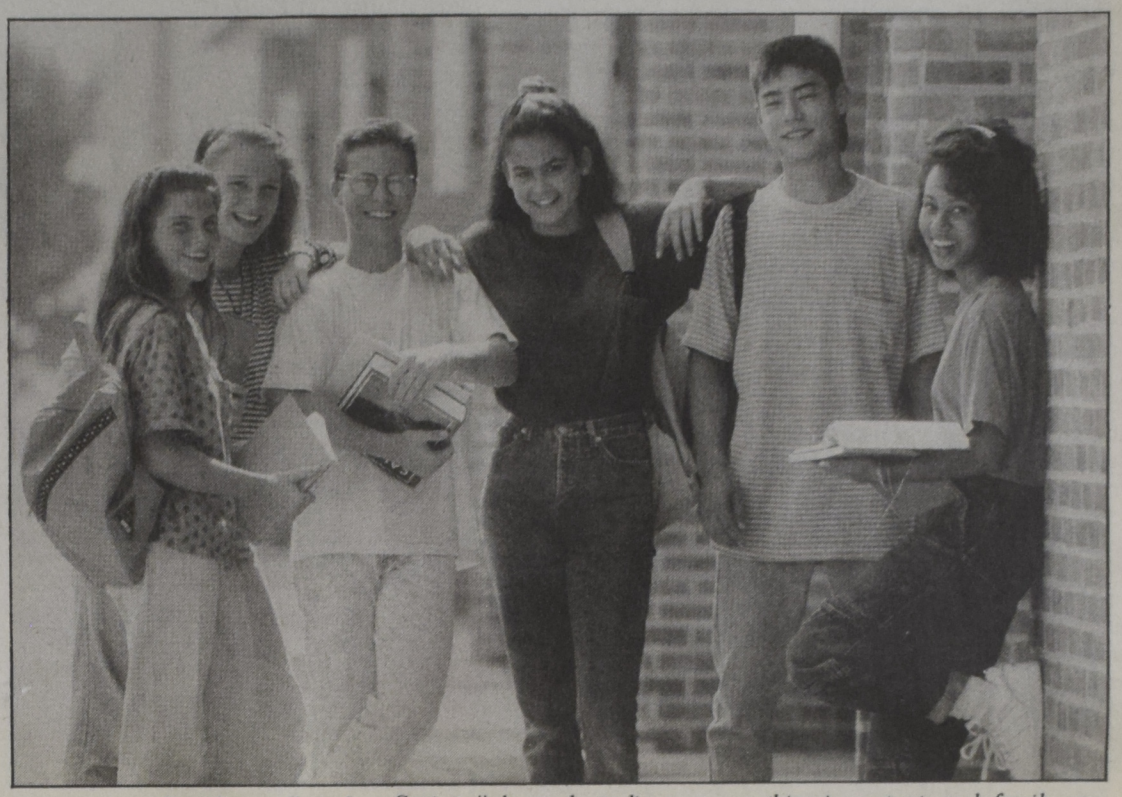
If all families are different, how does one come to an understanding about how families function? The answer to this question is a second important concept that students learn in "Families in Canadian Society." By studying family systems theory, students discover that understanding how a family functions is different from understanding how an individual functions. I use a mobile to illustrate this. It is very similar to a baby's crib mobile, except that instead of farm animals or birds, two parents and three children are suspended from the mobile's arms.

If a father is anxious because his job may be phased out (I tug on the father in the mobile), the rest of the members of the family feels repercussions of that stress (the entire mobile swings). Likewise, when a daughter is home from school due to an ongoing illness, her sister may be especially caring of her, while her parents grow increasingly worried (I tug on the daughter and the whole family swings in response).

Family-systems theory shows us the complexity of how families function. It shows how all of a family's members, each at their own stage of personal development, interact together.

Never static

Family development theory is a third important concept for students to learn about families. This theory describes how the interaction between family members changes over time (the student's family sculptures would have been different if designed four years earlier) and it does this through an examination of life stages. It is within these life stages that students examine issues that face individual family members and families as a whole.



In the course "Families in Canadian Society," the students discover something important: each family contains different kinds of relationships and each family is flawed – a realization that comes as a surprise to many.

Remember the questions which began this article? At each stage of life, whether we are young singles, newly married couples, couples with young children, teens or adult children, or seniors, we are faced with new questions. How do we find a life partner? Is there a right way to discipline children? What can parents do to enable teens to become responsible adults? What are the stresses associated with caring for aging parents? Where does one find course materials and resources that address these questions?

Naturally, a lot of secular material is available, particularly current sociological research and newspaper articles. Family law and child poverty, for example, have been headline stories this past year. While useful, these sources of information are insufficient. Biblical teaching needs to shape the course curriculum.

To date, I have found *The Family: A Christian Perspective on the Home* by Jack and Judy Balswick (Baker Book House, 1991) to be the most Scripture-honoring resource for this course. I have also used valuable materials from the Christian Reformed Church's Committee for Contact with the Government and the Committee for Justice and Liberty, both of which are concerned with issues that affect the family. In addition, I use many articles written by Christian sociologists and Christian therapists published in a number of Christian periodicals.

Making an impact

It is a privilege and a blessing to be able to teach, in a Christian school, a course on families. Stripped of the concepts of faithfulness, forgiveness, empowerment and God's family, the course would be, at best, a hollow structure lacking foundation and framework. What a blessing to teach love for one's spouse as a mirroring of God's love for his church, and marriage in terms of serving one's partner. To teach parenting as parents' opportunity to model the love of Christ to their children. To teach the honoring of parents as a model for honoring all those with whom we come into contact: our children, our aging parents, our friends. Each of us needs this kind of instruction to help us learn to love God through our family relationships.

Yet while I enjoy teaching this course, on an emotional level it is sometimes difficult to teach. It saddens me to discover the painful family experiences of my students, young men and women who experience broken relationships within their families, chronic illnesses, loneliness, depression and pain.

I am reminded time and again that all families are different and I, like my students, cannot assume that families, even within the Christian community, are problem- and pain-free. As I travel through the life stages alongside my students I revisit my harder times, failures and hurts, too. In addition, the Christian ideals I teach remind me of my own need for forgiveness and growth as a daughter, sister and wife.

I have been a teacher for 15 years, and in addition to teaching "Families in Canadian Society" I teach various levels of French, and a clothing/sewing course. While each of these has its own merit, value and interest, the family course, at least in one way, beats them all. Why? Because I know from the outset that when the course is over, students will take away some very practical and valuable life lessons. The course has the potential to be a life-changer.

So what am I hoping for this season? That "Families in Canadian Society" has an impact on my students in such a way that they become increasingly reflective on their experience of themselves and of their family. That they choose with care and intent lifestyles, partners and ways of relating with others. That they grow in their relationship with God, and that this relationship shapes the person they become in each stage of their life.

Shaun Vos is a graduate of Calvin College and is a teacher at Hamilton District Christian High School, Hamilton, Ontario.

Many faces, one family

Jeanette Romkema

Stories describing various types of family situations have been shared and read through the ages. Children love hearing about the rescue and "adoption" of Moses in the basket found in the bulrushes; Cinderella is a favorite fairytale known to children around the world; legends and folktales about orphan children and the magic they find have been told and retold across continents. This is not a new theme in literature; or is it?

When looking for children's books on "alternative" families in my personal collection I was ashamed at the realization that I only had a few. My children have friends who come from homes representing a variety of ethnic, religious, and socio-economic backgrounds, many not living in traditional family situations; yet I was not reading children books which reflected their reality. The below books were purchased to work toward changing this.

Billy and Belle (racially-mixed family)

Written and illustrated by Sarah Garland.
Toronto: Penguin Books Canada Ltd., 1992
Fiction picture book for Grade PK to 2; 32 pp.
ISBN 0-14-054437-2. Softcover, $7.99.

Excitement is in the air. Mom is going to have her baby and Belle is told she may spend the day at her brother's school. A story full of adventure and excitement readers are invited to watch the unfolding of the birth day of a sibling. A wonderfully refreshing book about a racially mixed family, in which their race is *not* the focus of the story. Use of comic strip boxes and double-text (story line around the illustrations and dialogue in the boxes) make for a playful read.

How It Feels When Parents Divorce (divorce)

Written and photographs by Jill Krementz.
New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1999.
Non-fiction book for Grade 3 and up; 115 pp.
ISBN 0-394-75855-2. Softcover, $21.

This collection of 19 stories, including children from seven- to 16-years-old and from highly diverse backgrounds, offers a look at their deepest thoughts and feelings about their parents' divorce. Through sensitive photographs and remarkable honesty and openness, readers become aware of the uniqueness of each individual's story. A remarkable book that offers words of comfort and license to grieve for those going through similar events in their families.

Mercy's Birds (single-parent family)

Written by Linda Holeman.
Toronto: Tundra Books, 1998.
Fiction novel for Grade 5 and up; 198 pp.
ISBN 0-88776-463-0. Softcover, $7.99.

Mercy lives in a single-parent home. Hers is a life out of control in which she has been forced into the role of mother in her own house, her mom's psychological problems are driving her into a world of darkness and death, and she fears of being put under the care of her relatives. *Mercy's Birds* is a story of strength and determination in which the heroine wins the reader's admiration and praise.

Hope (racially-mixed family)

Written by Isabell Monk, illustrated by Janice Lee Porter.
Minneapolis: Carolrhoda Books Inc., 1999.
Fiction picture book for Grade 1-3; 32 pp.
ISBN 1-57505-230-X. Hardcover, $23.95.

During a visit to her great-aunt, a young girl named Hope learns the meaning of her name, and the sting of being a "mixed child" is replaced with pride of her biracial heritage. A beautiful book of a child discovering her past through the sharing of stories. The message is clear: we are all one family and part of one race – the human race.

Grace & Family (single-parent family)

Written by Mary Hoffman, illustrated by Caroline Binch.
London: Frances Lincoln, 1995.
Fiction picture book for Grade PK to 3; 28 pp.
ISBN 0-7112-086907. Soft cover, $10.95.

"Grace lived with her Ma and her Nana and a cat called Paw-Paw." She loved stories especially those about dads, but it wasn't until she was invited to visit her father in Africa that she realizes that her family is spread beyond the confines of her house. The sequel to the internationally acclaimed *Amazing Grace,* this is the moving story of how a girl learns a new definition of family: it is what you make it. Illustrated in rich colors of Africa the images speak of love and understanding.

Tell Me Again About the Night I Was Born (adoption family)

Written by Jamie Lee Curtis, illustrated by Laura Cornell.
Ontario: Scholastic Canada Ltd., 1996.
Fiction picture book for grade PK to 2; 32 pp.
ISBN 0-590-03839-7. Softcover, $6.99.

"Tell me again about the night I was born…. Tell me again about how you would adopt me and be my parents…. Tell me again about the first time you held me in your hands…." A young girl excitedly answers her own question when she eagerly asks her parents to retell the story of her adoption. Through playful illustrations and heartfelt text this book brilliantly shares the excitement of becoming a family and experiencing its love.

My Family's Changing: A First Look at Family Break Up (divorce)

Written by Pat Thomas, illustrated by Lesley Harker.
New York: Barron's Educational Series, 1999.
Fiction picture book for Grade PK to 3; 28 pp.
ISBN 0-590-03839-7. Softcover, $6.99.

A young boy shares the experience of his parents' divorce. Simply written and illustrated, this picture book gives a honest look at the stages of separation and struggles many children go through when their parents divorce. Provocative questions found in a box on every other page challenge readers to look at their own experiences, encouraging questioning, communicating and the sharing of feelings. Tips on how the book can be used, a glossary, and suggestions for resources found at the end of the book add to its usefulness.

The Face on the Milk Carton (extended family)

Written by Caroline B. Cooney.
New York: Bantam Doubleday Dell Books, 1990.
Fiction novel for grade 6 and up; 184 pp.
ISBN 0-440-22065-3. Softcover, $8.50.

Janie Johnson has a loving home and caring parents. She never questions her family situation until she is shocked to find a picture of herself on the back of a milk carton under the headline "MISSING." This is the story of how a 15-year-old girl deals with the knowledge of her kidnapping at the age of three, and struggles to reinterpret her past and reclaim her future. With a title and story that send most readers' minds racing, this book will forever change how one sees the missing persons' wall.

Jeanette Romkema lives in Toronto and is a doctoral student at OISE-University of Toronto working in the area of children's literature.

A blended family: Adapting to 'yours, mine and ours'

Wendy Saunders

When my husband, Paul, and I married in 1988, the notion of a "blended family" was one to which we attached little or no meaning. Indeed, the term itself was misleading to me since it seemed to imply a sort of fuzzy, feel-good transfer of family traits and values in which the distinct identity of individuals disappeared, to be magically replaced by a new "blended" identity.

As the commonly used definition of a family in which there are two spouses with a child or children from previous relationships, however, we certainly fit the description. I was, at the time, a single mother with a six-year-old son and an eight-year-old daughter. I had just completed a college training program and had been living for four years in downtown Hamilton, Ontario, in a two bedroom walk-up flat.

"Having determined (as the saying goes) that failure for us was not an option, we set about to do what we could to create optimum conditions for our survival as a couple and as a family."

Paul was self-employed and lived in Niagara-on-the Lake, where he was the sole-support father of a nine-year-old daughter and a 12-year-old son. It was apparent to both of us that from a purely practical point of view (four children, two adults and seven cats), neither my apartment nor Paul's somewhat larger three bedroom home in Niagara-on- the-Lake would be adequate for all of us as a family .

It was also very clear that while our resources were limited, privacy and personal space were a major consideration for all family members. Enormous measures of acceptance, tolerance, respect and humor (not necessarily in that order) would be just as important.

I had read a statistic prior to our marriage that 47 per cent of all marriages involving a spouse or spouses with a child or children from a previous relationship were destined to fail. Having determined (as the saying goes) that failure for us was not an option, we set about to do what we could to create optimum conditions for our survival as a couple and as a family.

The author's blended family: (l. to r.) Rosanna Hessels, Wendy, Tobin Hessels, David Saunders, Paul Saunders, Rebecca Saunders (seated), Emma Saunders. Not in picture: Martin Saunders.

Relocating in more ways than one

The move involved relocating both of our families to a new area, a new home and new schools. Urban and suburban children became rural children. We inherited a sizable, if motley, flock of chickens from the previous owners of our house, and acquired a short-lived rabbit from a well-meaning Other Parent. We also immediately embarked upon a major renovation project to add the space necessary to enable each child to have his or her own room. Dishwashing schedules ensured that each child had his or her fair share of chores, in addition to keeping his or her own room tidy and helping with the animals.

Thanks in large part to the general good will of the children, we were met in the early months with few major problems. Given, however, the enormity of the disruption all of them had experienced, it did not take long for problems to surface. Each child experienced a period of adjustment, with varying degrees of impact.

The older children, most acutely aware of the breakup of their original families, experienced the most difficulty in adjusting to their new situation. For Paul's children, one of the family culture shocks included having a stepmother and step-siblings who were practising Christians, whereas they had been raised in a non-believing family.

Both sets of children were also very much a part of the lives of their other parent as well. Much time was spent organizing weekends away and shuttling children to and from the other parents' homes. We tried as much as possible to enable the children to maintain some contact with friends from their former homes and schools, particularly during the early days.

Grace at work

Neither Paul nor I attempted to replace the other parent, but tried instead to help to share the parenting load of the other, as well as to be another listening ear to our stepchildren. As in any family, sometimes the path seemed smooth, other times conflict arose, tempers flared and the difficulties seemed insurmountable. Unlike the traditional family, the unspoken bonds of flesh and blood were not there to reduce the friction of everyday life.

Just over a year after our marriage, Paul's daughter chose to live with her mother, who had by then relocated to live within the same school district. Though living with her mother, she was still very much a part of our lives.

Gradually, by and through the grace of God – whose love is stronger than our sin, weaknesses, and failures – a family did emerge from this disparate group. Despite enormous differences and interests, we became a family who looked out for one another.

Completing the family were a daughter and a son born in1994 and 1996, respectively. By this time, Paul's eldest son was living on his own, though he was the first one to come to the hospital to see his new baby sister. The new little ones provide a greater bond for all the siblings and are a source of joy to all.

If not compensation, acceptance

Our family relationships were never straightforward. Children who have suffered a family breakup have lived through an experience which has shattered their faith in the earliest and most basic human relationship of their lives. Various factors all contribute, leaving their marks: tensions within the step-family; anger and/or resentment towards the new situation in which the child finds him or herself. In addition, complications often arise in the relationship between the child and his or her non-resident parent.

You cannot compensate for the breakup of a child's nuclear family. Acknowledging that fact is the key to acceptance: each individual child has his or her own unique personality, background, strengths and weaknesses. Acceptance gives the freedom to explore all of the aspects of who this child is, without the constraints imposed by preconceptions of what a family is.

Paul's eldest son, now 24 and living on his own in London, Ontario, has a full-time job that he enjoys. Paul's daughter, 21, has travelled extensively and now lives and works in Spain. My eldest daughter, now 20, is in her second year at Redeemer College. My 17-year-old son is in his final year of high school. Our five-year-old daughter attends senior kindergarten, while our three-year-old son keeps us on our toes.

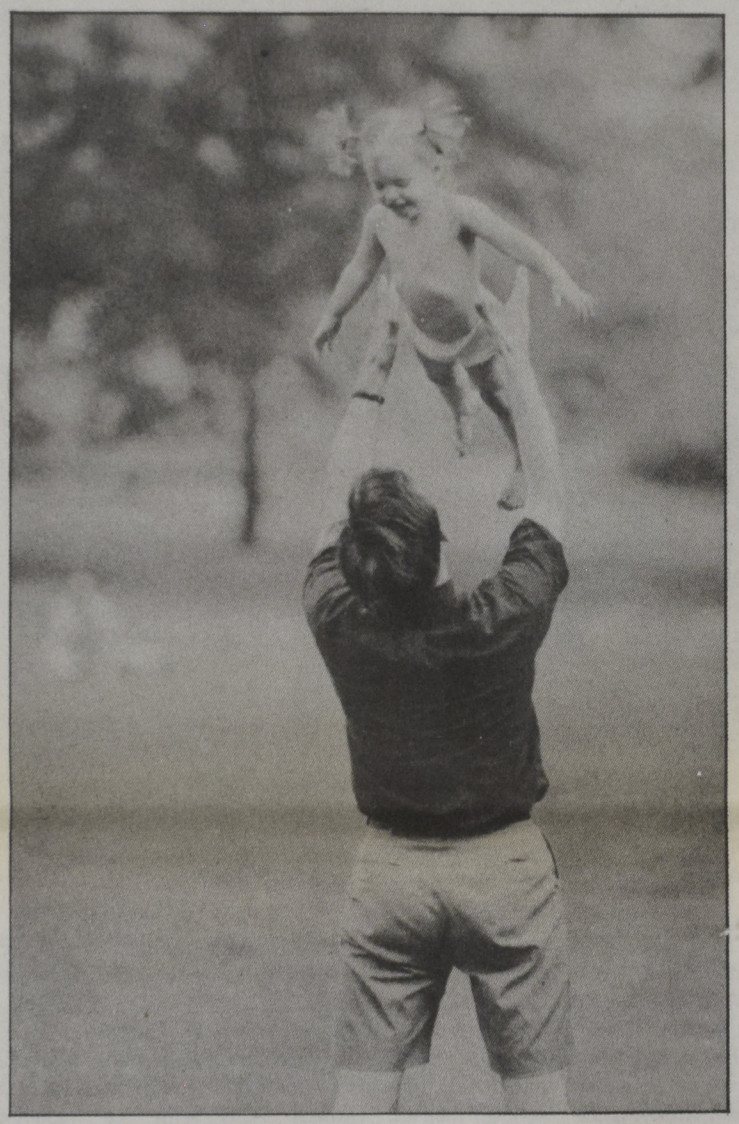
We are proud of and thankful for all of our children. God has blessed our family in many and unexpected ways: a phone call from a far away child; kindnesses great and small shown to one another; and the comfort we have in knowing that God watches over our entire family. Learning on the job as stepparents has not been an easy task, however, it is one neither one of us has ever regretted.

Wendy and Paul Saunders and their family live in Wainfleet, Ontario, where Paul is a musical instrument maker. Wendy is a member of Christian Courier***'s editorial advisory committee.***

Journal of the man

A divorced father fights for his daughter

Thomas Lile



"I was about to lose the only thing in the entire world that I cared about.... My daughter will never know that inside I have died a thousand deaths."

April 20, 1983

Somewhere in the past I have heard the word "hardheartedness" in common use. But this was different. Now it had taken on a human form, a face, a person to whom I had been married for almost a decade, the mother of my daughter. When I looked deep into her eyes, there was nothing there. They were like a blank wall, a fortress that I could neither reach nor climb. It was frightening to see a real human being turned into one with a heart of stone.

In the days and weeks since that horrible event I have been abruptly wakened, panic struck, from the deepest sleep. My mind has continually relived the deep anguish of seeing my lovely young wife running to the outstretched arms of another. To deepen my desolation, my sweet daughter has become entangled in the web of her parents' making. It has become, for me, a living horror story: losing my only child into a judicial system that proclaims to "care" but has not the capacity or the moral will to seek the truth.

Now I finally understand why "justice" is portrayed as a blindfolded woman. These hauntings mold my thinking day after day until a siege mentality gradually settles into place. I have vowed to never rest until my daughter, now a virtual hostage in her own mother's home, can choose her own deliverance. Then and only then will I be able to close my eyes and receive the blessed peace of sleep. Come, sweet sleep, for my own flesh and blood has been stolen away in the night and the man in the black robe cares not.

"Acquitting the guilty and condemning the innocent – the Lord detests them both" (Proverbs 17:15).

January 26, 1984

An open letter to the wife who departed:

At the start, it was only the two of us. There was no hate, and my love for you knew no boundaries. When you parted, my love remained, but the recipient had now died. So I took that love, that devotion, and directed it to our daughter; she is now the centre of my world. I know I was not the perfect husband; I know I made mistakes, too many to count. But you should not have left, for God Almighty was still at work in me. Years have passed since that day. You are content with those days and see them as rain upon the window, but I cannot. For I will always know the truth.

Our daughter is a wonderful little girl. So let her lesson be that her parents were flawed people, and let her life show the direction and purpose that ours did not. And when the last breath comes for you and me, let it be known that I would never walk away from those whom God has given to me.

"For richer or for poorer..., for better or for worse." Which of these mighty words did you not understand? Or, like most, did you deem these words as mere splashes of remembrances, not worthy to be valued?

March 8, 1986

Ever since the divorce my daughter and I have maintained our closeness. She is usually with me for two, sometimes three, days a week. We always have a great time together. Often we go swimming, play tennis, and we just "have" to eat at the big pizza place where the food is terrible but the games are fun. But still, it isn't enough for me. I will accept the job for now, but never will I be satisfied with it.

Over the last few years I have developed a relationship with an ex-college basketball star who has come to my aid in difficult times. This great guy, all six feet ten inches of him, has become an intermediary between my ex-wife and myself in several areas of dispute.

Recently I received a call asking me to meet him at his beachfront condo for a chat. I was suspicious, neither of us liked to engage in small talk of any kind. The conversation began on rather vague terms and suddenly swung to my 10-year-old daughter. I saw a tear drop from his eye as he disclosed that my former wife was soon going to be leaving for a job in the Hawaiian Islands. As a result, my daughter would be living with her on the other side of the world!

I sank back into the chair and went numb. It all happened too fast. I was about to lose the only thing in the entire world that I cared about. My crying turned to sobbing, and we uttered no words for almost an hour. That night as I drove back to the city, I felt my impending loss even greater and eventually fell asleep on a tear-stained pillow.

In the days since that dreadful night I have set my mind to at least the appearance of being strong. My daughter will never know that inside I have died a thousand deaths. I could not even go to the airport so see her off that last day, for surely my mask of control would have split open for all to see. I have never known the pain I felt during this time of my life, and I have asked the Lord to come and comfort me. He has surely done just that.

"Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword?" (Romans 8:35).

March 29, 1986

I was never able to understand it all. Everything was unraveling around me. There was not a day when I did not feel that all the forces of hell were firmly set in my path. I felt that the loosely formed union of in-laws and judicial courts had waged a five year campaign against me, where my victories were small or virtually non-existent. I was out-numbered and out-manoeuvred at every crossing. I felt that the mindless judge who determined that small children, in divorce, are better off with their mothers in every single situation should be stoned.

Now, as a product of that thinking, my daughter resides on the other side of planet Earth. There is talk of "getting together" once or twice a year just to catch up on everything. Becoming more secluded every day, I sit each night in the dark recalling times gone by. Many days of loneliness are to come my way, and I must either fall here or conquer this foe forever.

"I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world" (John 16:33).

April 6, 1986

I was never quite able to entirely understand the bond forged over the years between my daughter and myself. It was a gift from God, a mystery that evolved over time and never needed to be fully explained.

There were times when I would challenge myself to peel away the outer layer of our relationship and view what made it all tick. Some days I considered the union so special because she was an "only" child. Other times I reasoned that because I was now unmarried there was more time to devote to the cause. Then, one afternoon quite unexpectedly, the veil lifted and the inner workings of our special relationship became as transparent as glass: in her face I could see my own. A small defenceless child, innocent and pure, lost and looking for someone older and bigger to show the way. I had set about changing the past by changing the future. In so doing, I was able to throw off the years disfigured by parental abuse and restore, for both of us, the promise that it would never happen again.

Arriving at such a realization was both liberating and sobering to my soul. For while so many men my age sought greatness in the eyes of the world, I became very much content to find it in my own backyard.

"The path of the righteous is like the first gleam of dawn, shining ever brighter till the full light of day" (Proverbs 4:18).

July 9, 1987

My daughter, Sara, was born on Labor Day, 1976. We chose her name as a reflection of the biblical wife of Abraham, whose name was actually spelled "Sarah." It was Abraham to whom the Lord made the promise, "In you, all the families of the earth shall be blessed," and indeed everyone who knows my Sara sees the residual seeds of greatness.

It is 1987, and our family has now been parted for six years. New lives and new loves have sprouted all around and among us. However, no amount of time or distance

can divert me from my avowed position: I want my daughter back.

Sara`s mother has moved again, this time to Greenwich, Connecticut, and her personal life can only be described as a moral free-fall. I have consulted with some of the few folks who did not bolt in the days before and was advised to go easy. "Murmur not at the ways of Providence," I have been told on more than one occasion. Regardless, I have to act. The summer of 1987 will be my season of action and change.

"A righteous man may have many troubles, but the Lord delivers him from them all" (Psalms 34:19).

August 2, 1987

My hopes and aspirations for Sara and myself were never cloaked in secrecy. I made it very clear to anyone who asked that I intended to "win this one."

I met with my attorney and laid out a strategy wherein I would set forth the new agenda in a written document to be delivered to Sara's mother. There was no doubt that a collision of the minds was soon to take place. And indeed, one week after mailing the letter, I received the telephone call that would introduce me to new levels of anger while evoking memories of my turbulent past.

Nonetheless, her mother and I decided to meet at my home in the week following in order to settle the issue for good. I was understandably nervous during the days leading up to our meeting. I wanted to resume the daily role of father. But more than anything, I wanted to oversee the teenage years of my daughter's life that were set directly before us. Many years earlier I had been robbed of my own childhood, now I refused to have my daughter's childhood also stolen away from me. I was determined, no matter the price, to set us both free.

"Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled" (Matthew 5:6).

August 10, 1987

The meeting, if you can call it that, was strained and awkward. Sara's mother brought her 68-year-old father along for moral support. We sat in my living room glaring back and forth at each other while exchanging small talk. Finally, we got to the business at hand. Clearly, the years had changed both her and me. She had not remarried, and no longer was the confident, aspiring single who demanded that everyone provide her "her space." I had grown stronger and more assured with each passing day and felt my cause was noble and worthy of the momentary clumsiness of the situation.

"Many years earlier I had been robbed of my own childhood, now I refused to have my daughter's childhood also stolen away from me."

Two hours had passed when we shook hands and parted company. The battle had been won. It was, without question, the greatest victory of my life. I walked outside. The sky had never seemed so blue and the soft summer breeze was all for me.

On that glorious day there were no marching bands, no streamers in the air. But the sweet scent of vindication was mine. It poured across my lighted face and mixed with the cool elixir of recovered purpose. For once, I felt the good guys won.

"Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make your paths straight" (Proverbs 3: 5, 6).

September 22, 1987

As I write these words, the family is together again – the father, the daughter, and the overweight cocker spaniel named Pogo. I have always loved dogs. This pup has often been my only companion over the years, and his faithfulness should be a lesson to us all. I guess I feel a certain kind of kinship with him.

May 6, 1989

My new life as father is better than I could have ever hoped it would be. Days roll into weeks, and all is wonderfully mundane. I am like a soldier whose years of duty at the front have brought him to yearn for the solitude of peace. And yet the conflict still rages, not about me, but around me.

I spoke recently with a neighbor who had left his wife and three small children. His face showed no remorse or concern. He noted that there was a very good reason for his sudden departure: a beautiful young girl and the thrill of singleness. He rambled on about losing, not his family, but a house, belongings and the car. But oddly, all was well because he would have traded it all for what he now had gained, happiness. His words caused me to reflect on my own past. There were those anguished days when a younger man toyed with the delectable notion of disappearing into the night, but could never actually do it.

So I ask: how can a person gain happiness by turning his back on his own people? Can happiness be gained by staring into the eyes of your own children and announcing to them that they have lost their father to a sweeter, more gentle face?

As for myself, I have resolved always to choose to stay the course, to resist the pull of self. I can look confidently into the eyes of all whom I meet and know that promises kept are the backbone of people of integrity

"Blessed are the people of whom this is true; blessed are the people whose God is the Lord" (Psalm 144:15).

May 28, 1994

Sara graduated from high school yesterday. Her father was proud beyond words. In the early days she was shifted from school to school, from place to place, an unwilling player in the game of divorce merry-go-round. Yesterday, she climbed the stage to the podium as her class Valedictorian. She has raised the bar for all who will come behind her. I cannot say in mortal words how happy I am. I drafted some thoughts on paper, thinking she might include them in her prepared remarks to her fellow class members. However, when I heard her final delivery, I was glad she had passed over my words and used her own.

February 17, 1995

When I first set off on this journey known as fatherhood, I found sure footing on this time-tested principle: fathers produce children. Simply stated, in me my daughter would see the world beyond the backyard fence, and I would set her upon my knee and try to explain all things that were unexplainable.

As our lives over time became wrapped together, a discernible shift in my thinking emerged. Stepping back and seeing the big picture, it was obvious to all that I had become the student and she the teacher. I could not help but notice the eloquence with which she conducted every aspect of her life. I quietly marveled at it all.

So I gladly confess the error of my thinking. For I have learned from her far more than I ever could have revealed. I joyfully announce that fathers do not produce children, but rather that children produce fathers. Amen.

"Many women do noble things, but you surpass them all" (Proverbs 31:29).

December 21, 1996

Today was a day unlike all others. On this glorious day, I walked the aisle as the father of the bride. If pride were a ball of light, all of those who were present should have been blinded this day. My thoughts drifted back to the early days when my own young life seemed to hang each moment in limbo. How very happy I now found myself, as I realized one of my own has succeeded where I have stumbled and fallen. The circle of evil was broken here, never again to strike those who have run so far to escape it.

The journey to this place has taken my life over every bump on every road. It was a trip I began as a boy and finally completed as a man. This gathering of family and friends has brought me tears of hope and sadness fused with other emotions too deep and tangled to confront. "Now the job is done," I thought, "now the old warrior can lay down his sword." Perhaps it is time for peace to spread throughout the land.

I believe there will never be enough training for fatherhood; one lifetime is simply not enough. As fathers we must try our very best, and then ask only to be judged with boundless mercy. But we cannot escape the truth, the realization that all the daily tribulations have now become lost in time and only mountaintops remain.

Over the years, I am sure every father has looked closely into the deep recesses of his own being and finally yielded to a new way of doing things. That is, laying down his own life every morning for those who have always been there while refusing to pick it up again. In so doing, the very word "father" will no longer be a title, but rather a glorious sound that forever elicits wonderful memories from those who have always known the truth.

"I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day – and not only to me, but also to all who have longed for his appearing" (2 Timothy 4:7,8).

Thomas Lile is a tennis instructor living in Jacksonville, Florida. This article is an excerpt from a much longer journal in which the author describes what it was like to have alcoholic parents, and how his marriage fell apart.

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A childless couple experiences `surrogate' parenting

Walfried E. Goossen

Mary and I had been married a year when we met nine-year old Anand and his sisters, Nalini, 10, and Davica, 5. Their parents, Karen and Pam, had originally come from Guyana on a student visa (hoping to stay permanently) while the children remained with their grandmother in Guyana. We became influential in the family's life when Karen flew home and brought the children to Canada.

Nalini was extremely bright and mature for her age. She left much of her childhood behind in Guyana where she felt responsible for her younger siblings.

One day she played her clarinet for me. I was proud when I learned in a few minutes what she had learned in a day. I wasn't very proud when I noticed the look of anguish in her eyes. I realized instantly that I was competing with her. I hastened to reassure her that I had taken many hours of music lessons but I learned something that day about adult egos and children's sensitivities.

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"It is our duty and privilege as adults to give all children we know good memories of their youth."

Careful what you promise

We met the children of another family, Theresa, Paul and Thomasine, when I drove their father, my tutor at McMaster University, home one day. Thomasine, a Down's syndrome child, was six months old; Theresa was 3 ½; Paul, 5.

We were leaving their apartment a month later when I did one of those things adults often do. "Would you like to come home with us, Paul?" I teased. He promptly took my hand and walked to the end of the hallway with us. Mary and I thought he was "so cute."

But we didn't expect him to cry when I said, "You better go back now." He had taken me at my word. And *he doesn't need us anymore* was written all over his father's face.

We all realized Paul was "bigger" than we knew; we quieted him with the promise of a sleep over, soon.

Paul spent his first night away from home and his family with us. Putting him to bed with his favorite stuffed toy, leaving the bathroom light on for him, giving him breakfast were each a special privilege. It was parenting. It was a significant milestone in his life, as it was in ours.

Theresa was very different from her big brother. She was one of the loveliest little girls and most fragile children I have known. My beard and prominent tummy overwhelmed her. She would gaze up at me on the verge of tears if I came too close.

Eventually she made the trek across the great divide between us – five in the livingroom – and timidly came and stood beside me. She spoke only with her eyes as I picked her up and put her on my knee. She fixed her relentless gaze on me. Never flinching, never distracted by anything or anyone, she took me, her new friend, into her heart.

Theresa, too, reached a milestone in staying with us overnight, and soon she and Paul came together. A couple of years later Thomasine completed the tradition. We marvelled at her zest for life and her charming absence of shyness, with which developmentally challenged children seem especially gifted.

This family was to become a reconstituted or blended family. Walter remarried. He and Barbara soon added the "third branch" to their family tree when Aaron was born. We cared for Walter and Barbara's children when they were away. We became expert diaper changers and we learned to listen to baby talk. When Barbara and Walter came home I learned I was not the baby charmer I thought I was!

Our most intimate experience as surrogate parents came when we met the Dearsleys. Steve and Shirley were quite young but they were among the best parents I have ever met. Perhaps 10-year-old Brandi was one of those angels we entertain, unawares. One day she heard me joking with the mail carrier. "I won't get a valentine," I lamented, ""I'm married."

A half-hour later Brandi was standing on her tip toes at our door with her mother, clutching a penny valentine, offering it to me from her outstretched arm. Her valentine is still on my study wall 12 years later. I realized how simply kids communicate, how sensitive they are to God's promptings and that he can use them to minister his love to us.

Theresa's first communion will always rank beside Brandi's valentine in our memories. I have always believed that children can be very serious about faith in Christ. Jesus did hold them up as an example for us to follow. When Theresa and the others returned from church, Mary had a surprise cake waiting for her, gloriously ablaze with candles.

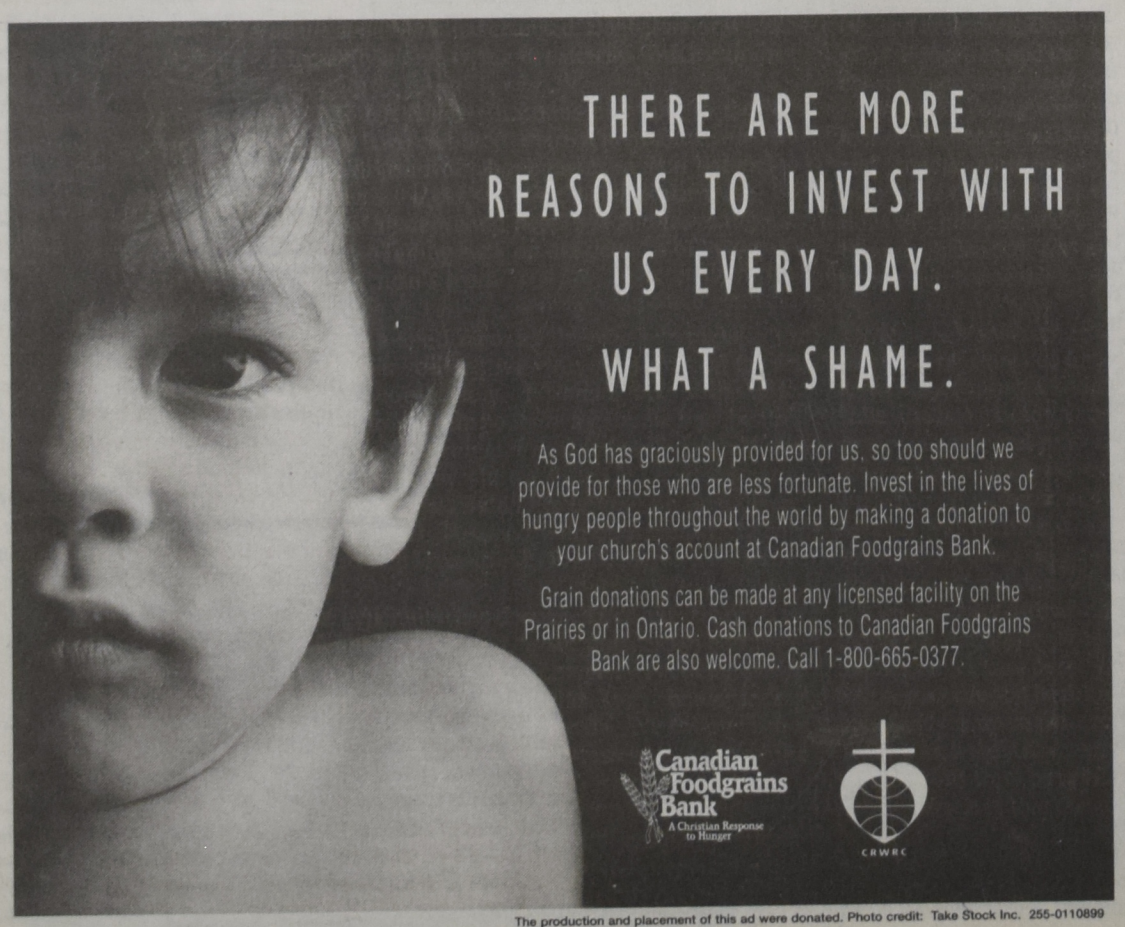
Evidence of grace

The electric lights were all out. There was a warmth and kind of evidence of grace in the air which seemed to turn our little apartment into a place of worship. We held hands forming a circle and said a prayer while the votive candles spoke to us things we couldn't utter in words. I saw how deeply Theresa was touched There was a presence of God in our midst which we can struggle to express but is only within the range of heart and spirit.

She said "Thank you" to Mary and me, individually, of her own initiative. Just two words, a simple eloquence which came from the very Spirit of God. In her white communion dress she looked what I imagine to be angelic. Light from the candles reflected in, and illuminated, her deep dark eyes. I will never forget it.

In twenty-six years of marriage Mary and I have had no children except the dozens we've shared with friends and relatives. It is our duty and privilege as adults to give all children we know good memories of their youth. Many of "our kids" are teenagers now. To me they are still fragile leaves fluttering in the winds and storms of life. May God preserve our still growing family through those storms.

Walfried Goossen is a freelance writer who lives in Dundas, Ontario.



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On the road to adoption

Drinking the cup

Wilma van der Leek

I don't remember exactly when it was that my husband and I knew that our two sons would be our only biological children; only that while our youngest son was still very little we reached that decision easily and comfortably. And now, several years later, we can see how God used that decision to bring us to where we are today: preparing for the addition of another child into our family through adoption rather than biology.

We had agreed, almost casually at the time, that if there were to be no more biological van der Leek children there certainly could be adopted van der Leeks if desire for another child grew. That vague plan suited our passing concerns about justice, but I don't think we ever really believed we'd actually carry through. There were so many ways we planned to serve: maybe a short-term mission project, maybe a long-term one; maybe this good cause or that. The "adoption option" was one more interesting conversation starter, but not really anything we imagined acting upon. But God began using that very loose commitment, rearranging us and our priorities so we would be willing to do more than talk.

Our sons grew happy and healthy; we spent money and time on interesting activities for them; we regained health and financial stability which had been unsettled for a time; we enjoyed a wonderful home, stable, challenging jobs and the fellowship of friends. Naturally, with all this good stuff going on, something had to give. What "gave" was our clinging to these things as if we could build our own safe kingdom.

We began to wonder more seriously if there was more to following Christ than enjoying and protecting the blessings in which we were abounding. What were the *costs* of our discipleship? How seriously did we believe that what we had was not ours to begin with? How much were we going to be willing to submit our little kingdom to the bigger One?

COURTESY WILMA VEN DER LEEK

The van der Leeks with their two biological sons, Caleb and Ethan.

Crowding into paradise

A Eugene Peterson meditation one day reminded us that there is "no true wellness till all are restored to a state of blessing." How could we, a high school English teacher and a graphic designer with two young children learning to serve God, become more active restorers? It didn't seem enough to continue on as we were.

We began to see that the world always crowds into the little paradise of our homes no matter how high we grow our back hedge (and at 15 feet, ours is pretty high already!) It's not such a far walk from a safe and beautiful back patio to the front page of my daily newspaper where the world is always crowding in with wars, rumors of wars, and other tragedies far and near.

Communications theorist Neil Postman writes that despite all the information about the world which we take in through various media, we rarely act on what we know; the excessive load is too much and we retreat into passivity or boredom. Postman calls this the LIAR: "low information action ratio."

This is quite a grim analysis for Christians who are called to be wakeful, never lacking in energy to care for God's world, and in particular, for those who are vulnerable. Planning to increase our family size through adoption gives us a way we can act, not just on information in the news, but on the "information" that we are to love our neighbor.

We became more and more sure that it was the safety, pleasure and intimacy of our family life which God wanted to stretch and use; that family was to be a blessing, but not an end to itself or an idol we served. That our family unit itself could open up more to the crying world and was maybe even exactly *designed* to do this.

We certainly don't see adoption as the end of our submitting to God or the route for everyone to take, but it has become a way for us to try to answer the question of Kingdom submission more faithfully. Even on this side of things, before our new child has even been identified to us, adoption has already come to seem very natural.

I loved rediscovering that adoption is the metaphor Paul uses to describe our relationship to God: "We also groan inside ourselves as we look forward to the time when God will adopt us as full members of his family" (Romans 8:23). Every one of us is an orphan till God parents us!

Desire, justice, adventure

When someone asks why we are adopting, I say: for desire, for justice and for adventure (the order changing on any given day.) For desire in that we truly want to commit ourselves to another child (if we didn't, the money we are now spending could no doubt be better served going directly to an orphanage or other worthy causes.) For justice, in that we want to be part of God's redemption and work for peace. For adventure, in that God's world intrigues us; we don't want to get too small in our thinking and so miss out on some great blessing somewhere else. Planning adoption has filled me with many new questions, fears, expectations and dreams:

I wonder why, in our pro-life Christian communities, adoption occurs mainly for infertile couples. I wonder if the privilege and responsibility of birth control doesn't raise new questions for how we build our families. I wonder why there is such a need for foster families in Canada and the U.S., and why I have fewer excited companions on this road than I had on the road through my two pregnancies.

I fear how this adoption will change the ease and certainties of the life I now have. I fear becoming self-righteous; I fear for my new child who may already be so damaged by life that she'll never learn to trust. I fear becoming a version of the adoption horror stories that surface all too often. And I fear the obstacles still ahead in completing an international adoption in a politically unstable country.

Tasting joys, sorrows

I expect that the first days and maybe years will feel strange and unsettled, but that our lives will be immeasurably richer; I expect that sorrow may be a permanent guest, but that love for this new little imagebearer of God will grow; I expect we'll continue to find encouragement, and that God will never abandon us.

And I dream the craziest dreams when I sit in church, dreams of many, many families walking in with a new child in their arms, whose face and skin doesn't match theirs; I dream of our new child, whose face changes shape and color in my dreams at night but who is always familiar in some unsayable way.

As a family, planning adoption has awakened us, making us search more eagerly for God to speak and direct us. For us, adoption is part of rising to Henri Nouwen's challenge for a full life: "Can you drink the cup? Can you empty it to the dregs? Can you taste all the sorrow and joys? Can you live your life to the full, whatever it will bring? Can we hold our life, lift our life and drink it, as Jesus did?"

We hope so!

Wilma van der Leek teaches English at Fraser Valley Christian High School, Surrey, B.C.

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The sounds of empathy

Getting Unstuck

Arlene Van Hove

A sound of desperation enters his voice as he talks about the hollowness in their marriage. His wife looks away. Confusion clouds his features.

Slowly, she turns to him. "How come you walk away from me when I want to talk? How come you talk to your friends but you don't talk with me? How come we're just living side by side?"

I ask Phillip what he hears Shirley saying. He looks mystified. "She thinks I don't have time for her, but I do! I often stay home while other things need doing."

I ask Shirley what she hears Phillip saying. She shrugs. "More of the same; he's around the house. And he is. But we rarely connect." There is silence in the therapy room.

The irony of the couples' pain is that we live in the age of rapid communication. Our modern technology allows us to be just a phone call away from our loved ones. Photos and other family mementos whirl around the world via the Internet. All this keeps familial bonds alive and humming. And yet, lack of connection between spouses is a common complaint.

God created us to be social creatures but connecting with loved ones in a healthy and nurturing way is not easy. Yet we need these challenges to help us grow and mature. At birth our family environment needs to provide the appropriate nutrients for our emotional growth. As we become adults our marriages or close friendships need to be a place in which we continue this life long process.

Phillip and Shirley's understanding of where the other is coming from is blocked by the depth of their own pain. This is common for disconnected couples. They are unable to get outside their own reality.

Emotional oxygen

What connects us to one another is the level of empathy within a relationship. It is a powerful emotional bond. It is the "emotional oxygen" that keeps relationships breathing and alive. Without oxygen, we die physically, without empathy, we die emotionally.

Had Shirley been able to hear and accept Phillip's feelings of confusion and frustration, and had Phillip been able to hear and accept Shirley's feelings of loneliness, they would have connected at this deep emotional level and further healing could have taken place.

When we are empathic with one another, each person feels affirmed and validated. We feel connected because our feelings and opinions are heard and understood. We then are able to see ourselves and others more clearly and consequently act more decisively. We feel a greater sense of worth.

Relationship nightmare

Lack of empathy within marriage or close relationships creates disconnection, the "relationship nightmare." Here two seemingly mature adults are reduced to anger and hatefulness. They begin to lash out or withdraw from each other. Over a period of time they become so estranged they no longer realize it is the pain in the relationship they hate, rather than the other person.

Communication coaches often view empathy as a proactive communication technique that demonstrates active listening and responding skills. But it is much more than that.

It is a way of *being* in the world. It is about being comfortable with ourselves and the beliefs and principles which direct our lives. It is about being open and appreciative of the nuances and complexities of life. It is about being "real."

As Christians, we do not emphasize the importance of effectively connecting with those closest to us. We become so involved in *doing* good for others we overlook the emotional needs in our own backyard.

Arlene Van Hove is a psychotherapist with Cascade Christian Counselling Association in Surrey, B.C. The therapeutic characters and situations she writes about in her columns are fictional, but reflect many people's struggles.

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A Story for Austin

By Lisa Pierik Neutel

I am Matthew and I am 5 years old.

I am in foster care. That means that my mom and dad can't take care of me, so I live with another family.

Diane, the worker who visited to help my mom, took me and my brother to Mike and Joyce's house to live.

Diane said that sometimes parents get really sick and can't take care of their families.

Sometimes dads beat up their families and then children can get hurt.

Sometimes parents use drugs and need to stop before they can take care of their families.

Sometimes parents just don't know how to take care of their children, or have their own problems that they need to fix. When these things happen, children go into foster care.

Mike said it is not my fault that I am in foster care. It is not because I'm bad.

Even though I'm in foster care, I know my mom and dad still love me. Even if they forget to visit me.

Sometimes I feel sad and miss my mom.

Sometimes I am angry at my mom that I can't live with her.

Other times I am angry at my dad for not playing with me.

At night I am scared that I will never get to live with my mom again.

My foster family does things differently than my mom. They listen to different music, music on tapes instead of the radio.

They have different toys, so I play with blocks and cars on a pretend street instead of with Power Rangers.

Mike and Joyce have different rules than my mom. At my mom's house I got dressed and brushed my teeth before eating breakfast. At Joyce's house I eat breakfast first and then get dressed and brush my teeth. At my mom's house, I played with toys in my bedroom. Now I play with some toys in my bedroom, and some in the basement.

Sometimes it's hard to live with Mike and Joyce, but I know they love me too. So, for now, I have two families, and two can be wonderful.

Lisa Pierik Neutel is a social worker currently living and working in Rochester, NY. She first gained insight into issues around foster care while working in Child Protective Services in Harlem. This story was written for her four-year old foster-nephew, Austin.

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WATER: Enough for our needs but not for our wants

Elbert van Donkersgoed

In July, three Ontario government ministries organized a series of "stakeholder consultations" on low water levels around the province. Water levels in many streams and shallow wells were lower this past summer than anyone could recall.

Last year there were drought pockets around the province. From March to May of this year rainfall for much of southwestern Ontario was 52 per cent of normal. Since then rainfall has been close to normal, and crop growth, as a result, has generally been good. But the rains have not adequately replenished the shallow wells that were at all-time record lows. It is expected that water levels in many streams and shallow aquifers will remain low into next year.

Those three ministries – Natural Resources, Environment and Agriculture, and Food and Rural Affairs – launched a joint assessment of the situation and a dialogue with those most directly involved ("stakeholders"). The first message from these discussions was clear: all stakeholders are responsible for wise use of our water resources. But beyond that general obligation to stewardship, Ontario has little in place that will help it share water, prioritize its uses or conserve the resource.

Slipping away like ... water

As with many places on our continent, historically our attitude toward water focussed on getting rid of it, the sooner the better. The drainage works, municipal and otherwise, built across Ontario over the past century are substantial. We have simply been able to take access to water – abundant water – for granted.

But we are on the brink of a whole new circumstance: not enough water for everybody's wants, and maybe just enough water for everyone's essential needs.

I'm praying for rain and lots of snow this winter. The Bible tells me that life is about prayer and work. It's all about prioritizing our wants and needs.

That pushes us to a whole new mindset around water and a paradigm shift in our relationship to each other. A whole new set of questions needs answers.

My use – or yours?

What are essential needs? Which incentives will encourage conservation? Can land-use planning direct development away from low water resource areas? Should some, or all, users pay for water? Should we be measuring the amount of water we use? Must we capture rainfall on our farms for future use? Are the water needs of a golf course, a tobacco crop and a pick-your-own strawberry patch of equal importance? Who decides?

Rain or snow may yet allow the urgency of these questions to fade. I pray that they do. But our growing water usage for urban development, electricity generation, water bottling, golf courses and farm irrigation will sooner or later strain the capacity of our resource. We cannot afford to avoid these questions.

Elbert van Donkersgoed is executive director of the Christian Farmers Federation of Ontario (CFFO) and editor of **Earthkeeping Ontario.** *The original version of this opinion piece was prepared as a "Corner Post" for CFCO Radio in Chatham, Ontario, and CKNX Radio in Wingham, Ontario.*

The 1930s revisited?

COUNTRY COUNTERCULTURE

VERN M. Gleddie

Agriculture is in trouble. The Wheat Pools and two other farm organizations representing almost 100,000 producers in Western Canada have together sent a letter to Prime Minister Jean Chretien, impressing upon him the gravity of the impossible financial pressure on many farmers. Poor weather and weak markets, ever-escalating costs and competition from farm products subsidized in other countries are creating overwhelming odds in the gamble of farming.

A crisis has been building for some time. The farmer, always at the mercy of weather, suppliers, markets and global politics, has long been running to try and stay ahead of them all. In the process, many farmers have lost their farms. Some have tried to diversify into producing more commodities which require large investment in different machines and buildings.

Prices continually rise for machinery, twine, fencing and building materials, feed, supplies, fertilizer and other farm chemicals. In comparison, farm product prices stay low and even drop titanically. Grain prices, for instance, are lower than they were 20 years ago.

Our land-locked and export-dependant agriculture is also suffering from government capitulation to the railroads, to the extent that transport costs have shot up and service has declined. Not only are cars for shipping grain less available, but many spur lines have been abandoned or are slated to be.

Government complicity is serious. Millions of acres of land (including the resources under them) and billions of dollars of public money went into rail company pockets for building and maintaining railways, with the agreement that farm products would get across the country at reasonable prices.

Precarious perch

The disregard for the importance of rail accessibility has meant the abandonment of rail lines and the replacement of the country elevator system by a few huge "inland grain terminals." Thus farmers must pay for ever bigger trucks to haul products longer distances. Country roads are breaking down under those heavy loads. Roads are financed by land taxes. Farmers, being the major landowners, bear the main tax load.

The Wheat Pools write that the current state of farming is the worst it has been since the 1930s Great Depression. If prairie-wide drought struck now as it did in the 1930s very few farmers would survive. During the Depression my grandfather saved the farm by selling cream and eggs in the nearby town.

I was told by another old-timer that it was so dry that the seed potatoes they planted in the spring one year were dug up in the fall for eating. But they were able to hang onto the farm. My dad says that farmers could get by because farm expenses were for only a few things like axle grease and coal oil. But now farmers are loaded down with debt, sophisticated machines and large holdings. They are highly vulnerable.

Everyone has a stake

Farmers must take some of the blame for their precarious situation. They have become over-specialized and too big, though admittedly, that is part of the "wisdom" of the age and an attempt to cope with small profit margins. They have indulged in all the convenience of city living, but then again, it's only what middle-class people in Canada are enjoying.

All of Canada must realize that it is both responsible for and dependent on agriculture. Our governments have been highly irresponsible in backing out of many of the systems put in place over the years to assist agricultural production and marketing. Farmers cannot exist without things like transport assistance to get products thousands of miles to port.

Farmers (and all of us) cannot be left at the mercy of large transnational companies which are gaining increasing control over life through the ownership and control of plant material and the means to growit, as governments back out of research and even monitoring and testing both crops and processed food products.

Yes, Jean Chretien should take some bold steps to ensure that Canadian farmers' ability to produce sufficient and healthy food continues. Some immediate help is needed, and a solid long-term plan, too. Government, it seems, cannot be depended upon, on its own, to either grasp the gravity of the situation or be responsible for the general welfare of the country by ensuring a healthy agriculture. The citizens of Canada must in some way make the necessity obvious.

Vern Gleddie runs a sheep ranch outside Edmonton, Alberta.

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Health tip for October

Comment

How do you picture yourself with Jesus?

Contemplating 'personal power'

Dear Adrian,

I've had a couple of conversations recently which got me thinking again about the subject of power – personal power, that is. What exactly is it? Who has it? How is it exercised?

It's something I have struggled with in my own life, and when I was working as a therapist I saw many clients, both men and women, who had difficulties in that area as well. Is it Christian to talk about "personal power," especially for women? Isn't the Bible all about meekness, gentleness, modesty and all those good qualities which seem to be the antithesis of power? And isn't "surrender" the essence of the gospel message?

Musing on all this reminded me of an experience I had several years ago. I was on a five-day retreat at the time because I was feeling somewhat helpless, angry and battered by some things that had happened in my life. One day my director suggested that I spend some time on the Scripture passage in which Jesus asks his disciples who people said he was. The director suggested that I answer that question for myself. Then he suggested that I turn the question around, that I say to Jesus: "Who do you say that I am?"

What if I stood face to face with Jesus? Or shoulder to shoulder? What if I were really an adult with Jesus? As I began to get into this I felt an unbelievable surge of energy. It was as if Jesus said with a twinkle in his eye, "Yes! You can act your age!"

As I thought about that, I came to realize that when I pictured myself with Jesus, all my images were child images. I was sitting on his lap, or with my head on his shoulder, for example. So I experimented with some different images. What if I stood face to face with Jesus? Or shoulder to shoulder? What if I were really an adult with Jesus? As I began to get into this I felt an unbelievable surge of energy. It was as if Jesus said with a twinkle in his eye, "Yes! You can act your age!"

I had to laugh as I realized that over the past weeks I had been acting like one of our grandchildren who was capable at that time of spectacular temper tantrums, at the end of which she would crawl onto her mother's lap with a bottle. To this day, if I'm unduly worried about doing something which I realistically am perfectly capable of doing, I tell myself, "Yes, you can act your age." And I feel some of that energy again.

So what is that energy, that power? It seems to me that many of us Christians feed too much on those images of helplessness being soothed at Jesus' breast. Many of our hymns, especially some of the older ones, really play on that. I know it's biblical to be yielded and passive with Jesus. Some of the psalms talk that language. But if that's all our spiritual experience consists of we're in trouble. Being an adult with God means accepting responsibility, initiating action, accepting consequences of what we do, all that adult stuff which entails power. How would our church be different if all the adults acted their age, spiritually speaking?

So, Adrian, is this a "woman thing"? I think the questions are universal, but I'm sure that in our culture it plays out differently for men than for women.

Meanwhile, here's to Adults for Jesus!

Best wishes,
Mary

Dear Mary,

"Is this a 'woman thing'?" I think you mean by "this" the experiencing of an "unbelievable surge of energy" in response to the realization that you were misled by what you had been told about your inferior status. And that is not only a matter of "woman" but a matter of oppression, presumed or real, wherever. I can think of two occasions in my life when a similar "surge" came over me.

The first was walking on McMaster campus for the first time as a fully registered student in September 1956. This snotty-nosed immigrant kid born in a Dutch working class family and still without financial resources *would* study philosophy, and nothing and nobody would stop him. And I remember the same energetic intensity the day I became the chief editor in a publishing house, even though I still had a Dutch accent. In both cases part of me whispered: "I don't really belong here, they think I'm not good enough," yet most of me knew: I could do what would be required of me, and do it well.

Yes, we can find the child image in Scripture, and also in our Christian experience. But yes, the adult image can be found in both as well. For instance, Scripture contains the calling for human beings to have "dominion" (Gen 1:28, see also Ps. 8 and Ps. 104). In Proverbs, Wisdom is portrayed as within the reach and grasp of human beings. And the Apostle Paul asks us to go for solid (adult) food and leave (infant) milk behind.

I think you're right that our tradition has stressed child over adult. Why would that be? That question got my mind walking down a number of lanes. One of them was the "deconstruction" lane, the reflecting on who benefits by having me think I'm a child and not an adult. As you know from previous columns, while I know that institutions are necessary for human life, I am always wary of them as potential oppressors of human freedom.

My own personal and reading experiences have often confirmed that institutions tend to have as their primary goal their own primacy. And one way of achieving such a goal is to let it hang out, bluntly and subtly, that most or all of the institution's members are not quite adult, not mature and educated enough.

I do not exempt the organized church from this conclusion. At some level it is a human institution with leaders and followers. It has subtle ways of distinguishing between those deemed most worthy and those less worthy. Ordination can be (most often is) a tool of separation between "adults" and "children" in the church. And when I think back of years (decades) of preaching, I cannot remember any sustained emphasis on declaring pew-sitters to be responsible adults.

Most sermons stress the "child" (dependent) side of Christian life. Your observations got me to reflect deeply on this. I came to realize that bad preaching and inadequate church teaching are tolerated precisely because the adulthood of pew-sitters is not acknowledged.

More than once I have been told that candidates for the ministry should not have been approved by some classis, even though they were. Apparently, for candidates to be refused because of incompetence is to jeopardize a system that distinguishes between the ordained and the non-ordained, between institutional adults and institutional children. Considering followers "adult" makes institutions messy, and institutions don't like messy.

But back to your own experience. The Bible can help us keep matters in balance. I experience this book less as theology and prescription than as challenge and discomfort. When my mind and experiences make me secure in "A," sooner or later the Bible will remind me that "A" is far less important than I had thought. When I stress my "adult," it shows me my "child," and vice versa. When I have its theology figured out, passages will cross my soul that put that theology on skids once more. When I revel only in "redeemed," I will soon be face to face with "sin" again.

Perhaps maturing in Christ also means being able to hold opposing images in balance; for instance, the images of child and adult. As adults we feel power, and as children we feel frightened and overwhelmed by power, and flee to those who will protect us from it. Perhaps true happiness is feeling child and adult at the same time, sure and puzzled, free and duty bound, dependent and independent, able and not yet, doubting and sure.

Thanks for raising an interesting, indeed bewildering, topic.

Love,
Adrian

Adrian Peetoom is a retired educational editor who lives in Waterloo, Ont. Mary Vander Vennen is a retired therapist who lives in Toronto.

News Comment

Nose for News

Bert Hielema

GOOD NEWS FROM Great Britain; and some bad news as well. The good news concerns the bringers of Good News: the clergy. *The Economist* reports that clergymen (and -women, I presume, although they weren't mentioned) enjoy the best of both worlds: "As well as looking forward to the joys of heaven, they are living the good life on earth. Nearly three out of four enjoy their jobs; among occupations in Britain, only medical secretaries express higher job satisfaction."

My explanation: I think that both the priestly class and the medical underlings are so happy because they can refer their supplicants to a higher authority. They can pass the buck, so to speak: "Let go and let God...." The bad news in England is that there has been a 15 per cent increase in lawlessness; but crime is being tabulated in a new way, so maybe it's not as bad as it sounds.

"THAT OUR ULTIMATE joy lies in heaven," to which *The Economist* refers, is the generally accepted notion of the Hereafter. This view was popularized by Hal Lindsay in his most famous book, *The Late Great Planet Earth*. If we are to believe his apocalyptic prose, now further promoted by Tim LaHaye and Jerry B. Jenkins, things here below are not looking particularly good for us earthlings. These men are believers in the "Rapture" and have exploited this vision in recent fiction, based, so they say, on the Bible, and thus marketed as "Christian literature."

LaHaye and Jenkins have become rich promoting this heresy. One line of bad writing says it all: "Two hundred million demonic horsemen are galloping across the smoky skies, and a third of the world's people will be slain – a third of those that remain, that is, following the Rapture, which has literally snatched believers from their cars and offices and carried them bodily to heaven."

Don't underestimate the impact of this teaching. *Tribulation Force*, one of a series of books written by these men, has sold 1.3 million copies since 1996. *Left Behind* has sold two million copies. And the most recent release, *Assassins*, will have a first printing of 1.5 million copies (that's why it's in the news).

I ALWAYS AM FRANK in these pages, sometimes too much so. So let me say that I hate this Rapture idea with a deep passion. Here is why: Noah was "left behind" while the real rapture applied to the rest of humanity, the sinners and idol worshippers. God loves his cosmos. Contrast this with the Rapture proponents who see the world as evil, and call cursed those who stay behind. Rapture believers treat God's world as a failure, and thus God as imperfect; and so they castrate Scripture, robbing it of its central message.

Rapture proclaimers separate Nature from Grace and so disembowel the Bible, that very book that they fanatically see as inerrant and infallible. Rapture radicals believe in a finite world warranting wasteful treatment, and so exploit the earth without any regard for the holiness of God's creation. They gut the gospel of its very essence and have caused capitalism to become the world's dominant religion. Enough. (Thank you, Editor, for allowing me to erupt in righteous raptural rage.)

THIS BRINGS ME TO A CENTRAL question facing believers today: "What is Christian?" The *Globe and Mail* recently had a feature on Christian rock. Its booming headline: "Jesus, the Ultimate Rock God." Here is a line from that page-long story: "...But unlike most rockers with a taste for doom and disease, Vomitorial Corpulence (the name of the 'Christian' band) has a mission: the band describes its new album, *Skin Stripper*, as 'extremely brutal demon squashing ... that beheads Satan and all evil in the name of Jesus Christ.'"

Continues the *Globe*: "Top-selling Christian bands look and sound much like their secular cousins, and often rock harder." My question: Is a band Christian just because it does not use the name of Jesus in an obviously demeaning way? When God appeared to depressed Elijah it was not in a thunderous, eardrum piercing beat, but in a "still, small voice" ("gentle whisper" – NIV). The loud noise reminds me of the Baal priests on Mount Carmel who made a tremendous ruckus to wake up their god. The problem with both Rapture believers and the modern drummer boys is that they don't know the Bible. But they do know how to make a quick buck. In the U.S., Christian artists account for about $750 million (US) in annual sales, more than the entire Canadian music industry.

ON TO SOMETHING quieter. Need sleep? Forget warm milk or counting sheep. A good way to get some longed for snooze time is to wear mittens and socks to bed. It may not be the sexiest bedtime attire, but scientists at Switzerland's Chronobiology and Sleep Laboratory said that warm hands and feet induce sleep quickly. The warmth of the mittens and socks dilates blood vessels that help to redistribute body heat. This, with the release of hormones that aid controlling the sleeping cycle, is part of the sleep routine.

HERE IS ANOTHER simple health aid that may add years to your life. Reports *The Guardian*: "In pursuit of a long and healthy retirement it may not be necessary to dispatch those over 65 to the gym or the swimming pool, according to a new study done at Harvard. Equally effective as physical activities are social functions, attending church, playing cards, going to the cinema, eating out, gardening, shopping, preparing meals and community work."

NOW FOR THE HARD news. I don't have to tell you that Russia is in a mess. Recent explosions there have leveled apartment buildings, killing hundreds of people. Russian politicians have blamed the Muslim people in the Caucasus, the Chechens, and people in Dagestan, who deny the accusations, and for good reason.

The big question: Who benefits from this unrest? Answer: Boris Yeltsin. He is in his last year in office, and parliamentary elections are due in December. He and his hangers-on are as popular as another hurricane in the southern Atlantic States would be. Because of the recent violence, Yeltsin could declare a state of emergency which would allow him to postpone the elections until he can ensure a loyal successor who would not jail him for fraud and crimes against the state. In other words, Yeltsin may be the instigator of these explosions. Remember: in Russia crime reigns supreme.

AND THEN THERE IS East Timor, which means little strategically, but which is a symptom of the state of decay of Indonesia. If this fair string of islands were to become unhinged and collapse into chaos it would have grave consequences for the rest of Asia. Through Indonesia's territory travel the oil supplies to Japan and China one way, and goods from the Far East to Europe the other way. Thus, insurrection in Indonesia haunts its neighbors because they are not at all prepared for this.

Political and economic uncertainty is new to the area. The Asian people saw themselves better than the rest of the world: more disciplined, faster learners, better organized, with Confucian cultural values that glorified abstinence and hard work and large savings – in contrast to the American vices of self-indulgence, leisure and being spendthrifts. The recent crises in Asia have shaken Asians' sense of self-worth; Japan is in a permanent state of recession and China is drifting towards a depression. Where Europe has NATO and even Africa has the Organization of African Unity, Asia has nothing of this sort and is utterly stunned by what has happened.

ALL IN ALL, THE WORLD is an interesting place. I may be a cynic, but at the same time I am a Calvinist who believes in original sin, and thus (apart from Christ) in depraved human beings, all too evident in Russia and Indonesia; and evident, actually, in all the human foibles I have described: in the Rapture ravings and the deafening drumbeats, all of which, I am almost sorry to say, makes my column possible. Will this mean that there will be nothing exciting to report once we are in the New Creation? Of course not. Then all the news will be positively exciting and minute by minute – even though we can assume there won't be minutes anymore. But we can be sure we will be surprised with new and never before imagined phenomena.

Bert Hielema attended a seminar called "Worship and the New Creation" at Luther Seminary in St. Paul, Minnesota on Sept. 18-19. The seminary is just steps away from the residence of the Hielemas' youngest daughter. More about that seminar in an upcoming column.

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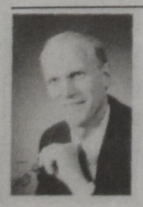

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RATES

The cost of advertising space is **$14.00 per column inch (pci) of length**. (All columns are 2 inches wide.) This rate applies to all personal and family announcements as well as all other types of advertising, including multi-column display ads. Clients will be invoiced after publication.

PHOTOS

There is a processing fee of $25 for the inclusion of a photograph with a personal or family announcement. Photo space is not charged pci, but we reserve the right to determine published photo size. Please note that we cannot use a faxed photo. We need either an original (which we will return) or a downloadable internet image.

PERSONAL ADS

Christian Courier would be pleased to handle your personal ad in an efficient and discreet manner. The cost to set up a personal file under a unique file number is $35. Ads requesting correspondence with this file are run at $15 per insertion. All correspondence is immediately forwarded unopened.

NEWLYWEDS & NEW PARENTS

We offer a $25 one-year subscription to couples whose wedding is announced in *Christian Courier* AND to parents who announce the birth of a child in our paper. Please let us know when placing your ad that you want to take advantage of this offer.

SUBMITTING YOUR AD

mail: *Christian Courier*
#4 - 261 Martindale Road
St. Catharines, ON L2W 1A1
fax: 905-682-8313
email: ccadpromo@aol.com

OTHER INFORMATION

a) *Christian Courier* reserves the right to print classifieds using our usual format.

b) Please provide us with clear copy. *Christian Courier* is not responsible for any errors due to hand written or phoned-in advertisements.

Birthdays

Warmest congratulations to our wonderful mother

JENNY SUK

on the celebration of her 65th birthday on Friday, Oct. 1st, 1999.
Mom, we love you dearly and celebrate you and the life that God has blessed you with. We praise him for his love and faithfulness to you.
Love from your children and grandchildren:
Evelyn Leech – Edmonton, Alta.
Jennifer, Matthew
Margaret & Mike Tompsett – St. Catharines, Ont.
Michan, Kurtis, David
Helen & Frank Louws – Raleigh, N.C.
Stephen, Erica, Mitchell
Ralph Suk & Mary Munkacsi – Fort Erie, Ont.
Ron Suk – St. Catharines, Ont.
Shirley & Jerry Van Egmond – St. Catharines, Ont.
Alysha, Jordan
Karen Suk – Vancouver, B.C.

Weddings

Congratulations to Karen Doreen Zwart and Edgar Drew Hielema on their wedding.

The families of
KAREN DOREEN ZWART
and
EDGAR DREW HIELEMA
are delighted to announce the marriage of their daughter and son which took place on Saturday, Sept. 4, 1999. Rev. Ruth Hofman officiated. Their address is 30 Robert St., Apt. 2, Toronto, ON M5S 2K3. We wish them many blessings and much joy.
Ellen Zwart & Rich Klajnscek and Diny & Bert Hielema.

Anniversaries

Jarvis Ont. — Jarvis Ont.
1959 — Oct. 9 — 1999
"May your unfailing love rest upon us, O Lord, even as we put our hope in you." (Ps. 33:22)
With joy and thankfulness to God we announce the 40th anniversary of our parents and grandparents
LOUIS & MARTHA BILL
(nee HOGETERP)
We thank you, Mom & Dad, for each of the many things you have done for us. We pray that you may be blessed with many more years to share with each other.
Love from:
Pam & Harry Stam – Jarvis, Ont.
Ashley, Matthew, Jonathan, Alyssa
Jennifer & Bram Drost – Thunder Bay, Ont.
Alanna, Philip, Stephanie, Leah
Reneé & Randy Nieuwsma – Caledonia, Mich.
David, Katie, Joshua, Alex
Barb & Ron Douwes – Simcoe, Ont.
Daniel, Chelsey, Bethany, Lexi
Chris & Kelly – Jarvis, Ont.
Cody, Regan, Kenton
Home address: R.R. 1, Jarvis, ON N0A 1J0

1959 — Oct. 12 — 1999
"All the ways of the Lord are loving and faithful, for those who keep the demands of his covenant." (Ps. 25:10)
With joy and thankfulness to God, we announce the 40th wedding anniversary of
ANDY & ANN LUTH
(nee HOFSTRA)
Dear Dad and Mom, Opa and Oma, your lives are marked by love and faithfulness. You have worshipped the Lord, loved each other and nurtured us with wisdom and warmth. Your faithful and dedicated service to the church and other Christian causes has always inspired us. We wish you many more years of health and happiness.
With love:
Terry & John Vanderhorst – Barrie, Ont.
John, Audrey, Erin, Andrew, David,
Regan Luth – St. Albert, Alta.
Wilma Luth – Sapporo, Japan
Larry, Tracey, Rebecca, Adam Luth – Sarnia, Ont.
Andrew, Linda, Patricia Luth – Hamilton, Ont.
We will be hosting an open house on Saturday, Oct. 23, 1999, from 2-4 p.m. at Maranatha Christian Reformed Church, Woodstock, Ont.
Correspondence: Mr. & Mrs. A. Luth, 17 Fairview Cr., Woodstock, ON N4S 6L6

Miscellaneous

Sing with your grandchildren the old familiar **Dutch Christmas carols** in this bilingual edition, set to music. $16. per copy, three copies for $45. Send cheque to: **C. Fuykschot, 160 Churchill Dr., Gananoque, ON K7G 1R8.** Prompt delivery.

Miscellaneous

FOR SALE OR RENT. One bedroom mobile unit with sunroom in Palmetto, Florida, six years old. Call **519-542-4886**.

Births

VANSTAALDUINEN:
With great joy and thankfulness to our Lord and Savior, Rob & Ingrid announce the early arrival of their daughter,
HANNAH JANE
born Aug. 12, 1999. A sister for Jacob and Joey. Proud grandparents are Ray & Dianne vanStaalduinen and Harry & Jane Bovenberg.
"And whoever welcomes a little child like this in my name welcomes me." (Matthew 18:5)
Home address: **1273 Rosseau Pl., Burlington, ON L7P 3N1**

Anniversaries

Echtenerbrug, Fr. the Neth. — Ingersoll Ont.
1959 — Oct. 8 — 1999
"Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good. His love endures forever." (Ps. 136:1)
We are pleased to announce the 40th anniversary of our parents and grandparents:
FRANK & ELIZABETH DEJONG
(nee HEIDA)
With all our love:
Femmy & Jamie Esler – Dorchester, Ont.
Tyler, Ryan
Hessel DeJong – Ingersoll, Ont.
John DeJong – Ingersoll, Ont.
Jake DeJong & Tracy – Ingersoll, Ont.
Brenda DeJong – Ingersoll, Ont.
Home address: 233 Oxford St., Ingersoll, ON N5C 2V8
Phone: 519-485-3657

Aylmer Ont. — St. Thomas Ont.
1959 — Oct. 10 — 1999
"Yet I am always with you; you hold me by my right hand." (Ps. 73:23)
With joy and thanksgiving to God for his providence and faithfulness, we plan, D.V., to celebrate the 40th wedding anniversary of our parents and grandparents,
HENRY & CYNTHIA SMIT
(nee BOOY)
Congratulations, Mom & Dad!! We pray for joy and many blessings for you in the years to come.
With much love,
Tom & Margriet Smit – Sarnia
Patricia & Ed Wolting – Chatham
Kathy & Bill Vanderlinde – Sarnia
Brian & Jennifer Smit – Strathroy
Jeff & Bonnie Smit – Wyoming
Dan Smit – St. Thomas
and your 19 grandchildren!
Please join us in celebrating this occasion with an open house on Saturday, Oct. 9, 1999, from 2-4 p.m. at the First Chr. Ref. Church, Elm St., St. Thomas, Ont.
Home address: 790 Elm St., St. Thomas, ON N5R 1L5

Obituaries

Almkerk, N.B. the Neth. — Trenton Ont.
Aug. 29, 1914 - Aug. 24, 1999
On Tuesday, Aug. 24th, the Lord called Dad home to his eternal rest five days before his 85th birthday. We thank God for the Godly heritage Dad left us and pray we will be faithful in passing it on to our children and grandchildren.
JOHANNES (JOE) DIBBITS
His grateful children and stepchildren:
Toni & Martin Kamper – Burlington, Ont.
Hans & Wilma Dibbits – Trenton, Ont.
Peter & Jane Dibbits – Brighton, Ont.
Rita & Peter Baljeu – Windsor, Ont.
Anne & Jim Scheefel – Brantford, Ont.
Ralph & Ina Wesseling – Vanessa, Ont.
Tina & Adrian Wamsteeker – Meaford, Ont.
Barney Wesseling – Jarvis, Ont.
Predeceased by his first wife Gijsbertha in 1968 and his second wife Aleida (Wesseling) in 1987.
Lovingly remembered by 28 grandchildren and 22 great-grandchildren.
Joe is survived by two brothers Wout and Gerrit and one sister Mieneke in the Netherlands.
"I have set the Lord always before me. Because he is at my right hand I will not be shaken." (Ps. 16:8)
Correspondence address: Peter Dibbits, RR 3, Brighton, ON K0K 1H0

ANNIE DROST
1913-1999
On Sept. 13, 1999, our mother, grandmother, and great-grandmother passed away.
She was predeceased by her husband, Klaas.
Her confidence in her redemption through Christ and her unwavering faith in the loving providence of God was an inspiration for all of us. Her faith sustained her in the nurturing of six sons and one daughter, in immigrating to Canada from the Netherlands, in caring for her husband during his many years of illness and in grieving the loss of a son.
We thank God for her love for us, and for her Christ-like example.
Joe & Christina Drost
Chuck & Annette, Pete & Joyce, Don & Connie, Marlene & Fred Mast, Mark & Brenda.
George & Susan Drost
Frances & Rob La Bastide, Clarence & Shirley, Marie & Dean Workman, Ken & Joyce, Tom & Marnie, Lorraine & Warren Burnett, Steve, Debbie, Julie.
John & Bertha Drost
Lynn & Wilmot Ramitt, Heather & Robert Kamps, Geoffrey & Laura.
Pat Drost (Pat's husband, Herman, passed away in 1996)
Rob & Carolyn, Dave & Deb, Betty & John VandenEnde, Donna & John VandeVelde, Carol & Peter Mellema.
Wayne & May Drost
Pamela & Blake Beattie, Anne & Peter Krismer, Christal & Alex Kapteyn, Amanda, Bronwyn.
Jake & Ina Drost
Brian, Ron, Al, Lawrence & Jeanie.
Jan Drost
Reuben, Samara, and Briana Stob.
and 44 great-grandchildren.

Classifieds

Anniversary

Congratulations to John & Alice Heyerman on their 50th wedding anniversary.

With joy and thanksgiving to the Lord,
JOHN & ALICE HEYERMAN
with their children invite you to share in the celebration of their 50th wedding anniversary.
Married on Oct. 20, 1949.
Open house to be held Saturday, Oct. 23, 1999, D.V., at Ebenezer Christian School, 77 Fairview Ave., St. Thomas, 2-4 p.m. Best wishes only, please.

Births

"I will praise thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; marvelous are thy works, ..." (Ps. 139:14)
REGTS - SJAARDA:
It is with joy that Ed & Carol announce the arrival of
MACKENZIE PAIGE
on Sept. 19, 1999. Bailey and Bradley are delighted with their little sister.
She is the 58th Oer-Lyts Bern foar Pake & Beppe Pieter en Hiltje Hoekstra (Adema) and the 56th great-grandchild Mrs. Lutina Wielhouwer-VanDorsten.
Also, the 5th Lyts Bern foar Pake & Beppe Henry & Sarah Regts (Hoekstra), and the 11th grandchild for Kenneth & Lucille Sjaarda (Wielhouwer), all residing in Chatham, Ont.
Mackenzie Paige makes her home at 22743 Creek Rd., R.R. 3, Chatham, ON N7M 5J3

SLUYS:
Alex would like to announce that he has a baby sister,
ABBY LEIGH
She was born on Aug. 11, 1999, at the PGH in Chatham. Parents Rob & Patricia, along with grandparents, Charles & Jennie DeVries and Bill & Jill Sluys rejoice in her safe arrival. Praise God!

Obituaries

Psalm 136:1
On Sept. 21, 1999,
ANTJE (ANN) BEENS
of Edmonton, Alta., widow of Harm Beens, went to be with her Lord at the age of 90 years.
She is survived by one son:
Harry Beens – Cambridge, Ont.
four grandchildren:
Andrew & Teresa Vanderkooi
Anita & Warren Hennings
Mark John & Jennifer Beens
AnnMarie & Jeff Denomme
six great-grandchildren, Alisha, Chelsea, Kyle, Jared, Corey, Kyle
one step-brother, Dirk Weggemans and other family in the Netherlands.
She was predeceased by her daughter and son-in-law, Irene & Sid Vanderkooi.
A memorial service was held after the graveside service on Friday, Sept. 25 at 11 a.m. at the Maranatha Christian Reformed Church, Edmonton, Alta. Rev. Arthur L. Verboon officiated. Donations appreciated to Shepherds Care Foundation, Wellness Centre, 6620 28th Ave., Edmonton, AB T6K 2R1.
Contact address:
Jane & Will Dubbeldam
403-2011 137th Ave., Edmonton, AB T5A 4W2

JACOBUS (JAKE) KNEGT
called home to be with his Lord at the West Lincoln Memorial Hospital, Grimsby, Ont. on Saturday, Sept. 4, 1999, in his 69th year. Loved son of the late Willem & Margaret Knegt.
Dear brother of:
Mary Deys – London
Abe & Janet Knegt – Stoney Creek
Co & Wim Van Willigen – the Neth.
Joan & Turner Roorda – Orangeville
Margaret & Bill Colyn – Grimsby
Willy & Bill VanderHeide – Wellandport
Hans & Henny Knegt – Brighton.
He will be sadly missed by his many nieces and nephews. Jake is also predeceased by his brother Johan and brother-in-law Phillip Deys.
The funeral service was on Wednesday, Sept. 8, 1999, at Mountainview Christian Reformed Church, Grimsby. Burial was at Chapel Hill Memorial Gardens, Stoney Creek. Memorial donations to Shalom Manor would be appreciated by the family.
His patience, endurance and happiness was an example to everyone during his 25 years of illness. His favorite Bible passage was Isaiah 40:28-31.
Correspondence address:
Mr. Abe Knegt, 239 McNeilly Rd., Stoney Creek, ON L8E 5H2

Miscellaneous

Looking for **Expositor's Bible Commentary** - Old Testament by Zondervan. Call Ann **905-774-8202.**

Church News

Christian Reformed Church

Rev. Jake Kuipers declined a call to Second CRC, Abbotsford, B.C.

Obituaries

Wanneperveen Brampton
the Neth. Ont.
Oct. 20, 1920 - Aug. 13, 1999
"The Lord is my shepherd...and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord forever." (Ps. 23)
The Lord took unto himself on Aug. 13, 1999,
JAN IDSERDA
of Brampton and formerly of Harriston and Guelph, in his 79th year.
Beloved husband of Jantje "Jane" (Kin) Idserda.
Dearly beloved father of:
Evert Idserda – Brantford
Trudy & Peter Osinga – Kitchener
Loved grandfather of:
Peter & Barb Osinga – London
Dr. Christopher & Lisa Osinga – Halifax
Kimberly & Rick Dykstra – London
Cherished great-grandfather of:
Ryan Dykstra – London
The funeral service, under the leadership of the Rev. John Top, was held at the Hardy-Lee Funeral Home in Harriston with interment in The Harriston Cemetery on Saturday, Aug. 14, 1999.
Correspondence address:
Mrs. J. Idserda, Apt. 1105, Providence Tower, Holland Christian Homes, 7900 McLaughlin Rd., Brampton, ON L6Y 5A7

Obituaries

On Thursday, Aug.12, 1999, the Lord took home his loving child
MIKE (MEINDERT) KLOOSTRA
at age 60 after four years of struggling with leukemia, making his journey home at the end very peaceful.
He left behind his loving wife of 39 years, Agatha.
His loving children:
Laurie & Kevin Breeze – Newcastle
Jim & Brenda Kloostra – Cobourg
Four grandchildren:
Nathan & Heather Breeze
Sonya & Brianna Kloostra
He will also be missed by his large loving family and his many friends.
Beloved brother of:
Ellen & Klags Scheepstra – Orillia
Ruby & Bill Leistra – Chatham
John & Ann Kloostra – Brighton
Sieger & Henny Kloostra – Codrington
Sylvia & Sako Greydanus – Napanee
Trudy & Klaas Hoogsteen – Oshawa
Elizabeth & Don Harnden – Orono
Doris & Frank Vrengdenhil – Frankford
Jane & Pete Dibbits – Brighton
Jasper & Margaret Keizer – Trenton
Sue & Jerry Jouwstra – Colborne
John & Jane Egas – Carrying Place
Predeceased by his parents Janke & Renze Kloostra, and sister Mary.
Beloved son-in-law of Annis & John Egas.
Beloved uncle of many nieces & nephews.
Funeral service was held at the Grace Christian Reformed Church, Cobourg, Ont. on Aug. 14, 1999.
"Mine eyes have seen the glory of the coming of the Lord."
"Great is Thy faithfulness, Oh God my Father!"
Correspondence address: Agatha Kloostra, 4 Springbrook Rd., Cobourg, ON K9A 4H7

The Lord called unto himself
YFKE VANDERSLUIS
(nee SCHOLTE)
from her residence at R.R. 5, Simcoe on Saturday, Aug. 14, 1999, in her 68th year.
Beloved wife of George.
Dear mother of:
Tina & Jack VanNetten – Simcoe
Aggie & Ed Collins – Simcoe
Gail & Ralph Hofland – Waterford
Grandmother of:
Kevin, Michael VanNetten
Emily, Steven Collins
Craig, Alisha Hofland.
Sister and sister-in-law of Jan & Trinke, Wiebe & Marijke, Henk, Gooiske & Hielke Klaven, Jennie Scholte (and the late David), Mel Jelsma (and the late Eeke).
The funeral service was held at the Ebenezer Christian Reformed Church in Jarvis, Ont. on Aug.17th. Pastor Ken Benjamins officiated.
Correspondence address:
George Vandersluis, R.R. 5, Simcoe, ON N3Y 4K4

Personal

60-year-old Christian Reformed lady of non-Dutch background wishes to meet sincere Christian men. Reply to **File #2694, c/o Christian Courier, 4-261 Martindale Rd., St. Catharines, ON L2W 1A1.**

Obituaries

Smilde, Dr. Hagersville
the Neth. Ont.
Nov. 9, 1910 - Aug. 13, 1999
The Lord called unto himself our dear mother, grandmother, and great-grandmother,
TRIENTJE (TINA) BOSMA - VAN GOOR
Predeceased by our father, Anne Bosma (1966) and two grandchildren, Elaine (1962) and Mark (1966) Bosma.
"He who dwells in the shelter of the Most high will rest in the shadow of the Almighty. I will say of the Lord, 'He is my refuge and my fortress, my God, in whom I trust.'" (Ps. 91:1-2)
Lovingly remembered by her children and grandchildren:
Case & Wilma – Hamilton
Alvin (Elsie), Bob (René), Marlene (Simon), Sid (Francis)
Jane & Peter Mulder (1992) – Wellandport
Bert (Marietta), Clarence (Henrietta), Harold (Yvonne), Katie (Roger)
Sid & Tena – Lynden
Robert (Cheri), Chantelle, Brent, Andrew
Jake & Gail – Carlisle
Mike (Claire), Jim (Christina), Tanya, Shannon
Albert & Helen – Hagersville
Brenda (Ray), Cindy (Ken), Lisa (Jim), Glenn, Mark, Tamara (Gary)
Evelyn & Peter Bergman – St. Catharines
Kevin (Tracey), Stacey (Jim), David (Sandy), Brian (Ruthann), Karen (Phil)
Hank & Mary – Ancaster
Jennifer, Michelle, Tim, Stephanie
Also loving great-oma of 45 great-grandchildren.

Oostermeer, Fr. Brampton
the Neth. Ont.
March 6, 1915 - Sept. 8, 1999
The Lord in his covenant faithfulness called home, after a short illness, our dear wife and mother,
TRYNTJE VEENSTRA
(nee BOOM)
at the age of 84 years, after a happy marriage of 61 years.
Beloved wife of
Hendrik Veenstra – Brampton, Ont.
Dear mother of
Sake & A. Gerda Veenstra (nee Terpstra) – Don Mills, Ont.
Correspondence address:
Sake Veenstra, 11 Farmcote Rd., Don Mills, ON M3B 2Z5

Teachers

TORONTO, Ont. : Willowdale Christian School is in need of a **full-time teacher** for a **Grade 6 class** from Nov. 15, 1999, to the end of April 2000 for a **maternity leave**. Ability to teach **Grade 6-8 French** is a must. However, applications for a non-French teacher will be considered for a part-time (72%) position and applications for a part-time French teacher (28%) are also invited. Please direct inquiries or resumes to:
Mrs. C. Bootsma, Principal
60 Hilda Ave.
North York, ON M2M 1V5
phone: 416-222-1711
fax: 416-222-1939

Classifieds

Help Wanted

Route delivery person. Qualified **DFZ licence** with the following qualifications: strong (heavy lifting), bondable, clean driving record, courteous, committed, punctual. Send application to: **Culligan Niagara Water Technologies, Attn.: Ike, 92 Dunkirk Rd., St. Catharines, ON L2P 3H4.**

Personal

Christian Reformed, 67, living in Ontario, semi-retired. Interested in farming, travelling and church activities. Would like to meet active Christian lady. Reply to **#2696, c/o Christian Courier, 4-261 Martindale Rd., St. Catharines, ON L2W 1A1.**

Houston Christian Reformed Church
in beautiful northwest British Columbia is seeking a

Full-Time Pastor

to provide sound biblical preaching, ministry to youth and pastoral care. The church membership stands at 67 families, which translates into 169 professing members and 154 non-professing or baptized members. Please send a copy of your profile. A church profile is available upon request. For more information, please contact:

Rick Delau, Search Committee,
Houston Christian Reformed Church
Box 6, Houston, BC V0J 1Z0
phone: 250-845-7756 fax: 250-845-7578

Classis Niagara Church Directory

Directory 2000 ad deadline: Nov.1/99

Each year *Christian Courier* produces a church directory for the 13 Christian Reformed Churches in Classis Niagara. This project is financially feasible thanks to the many Christian organizations and businesses which buy advertising space in the directory.

1-800-969-4838

If you think your ad should be in there, too, don't miss this opportunity to get your message to 2200 CRC families – and to help support good communication within the church family.

Planning a trip to the Netherlands?

birwa tours

is a transportation specialist with unlimited possibilities at your service

1. We can arrange your transportation between Schiphol/ Amsterdam
2. We can rent you the newest cars and minivans (up to 9 passengers)
3. If you're with a group, we can arrange travel all over Europe in comfortable touring buses, even including hotel and sightseeing arrangements.

Always call, fax or write
birwa tours, P.O. Box 82
9104 ZH DAMWOUDE, The Neth.
ph: 011-31-511-424114
fax: 011-31-511-424015
In Canada: call Mrs. Henny Huiskamp at 613-393-5256

Terrific news for NEW ***Christian Courier*** subscribers who sign up in November 1999.
Time to get your own subscription – a collection of 26 energetic issues – to ***Christian Courier*** anyway.

But now you get a new look at the book of Job as well:
A Battle for Righteousness
by Prof. Dr. K.L. Popma,
trans.by Jack Van Meggelen

What are you waiting for?

"[This] translation of Professor Popma, one of the most important writers of the century in the Netherlands, brings a new friend into our English speaking communities of faith. Popma, via Van Meggelen, gives us Job as true Christian gospel, a profound immersion in God's ways with us."
Dr. Eugene H. Peterson, Prof. Emeritus, Regent College, Vancouver, BC

God's Children Sing & Play

A Christian Music & Movement Program for Children birth to 9 yrs.

(905) 682-4653

The **CRC Ministry to Seafarers** in **Montreal** is in need of **volunteers** during November and December as well as the winter and spring months of 2000. For more information, call 514-844-1476, fax 514-844-1472, or e-mail seafarer@colba.net, attn Karin.

FOR RENT: Central Florida (near Cypress Gardens) – 2 BR **mobile home**, comfortably + fully furnished, screened room, A/C, adult park, $600/month US incl. Nov., Dec., Apr., May. Call 613-542-8271 or e-mail wvos@sprint.ca

DORDT COLLEGE

Graduate Adjunct Faculty Positions

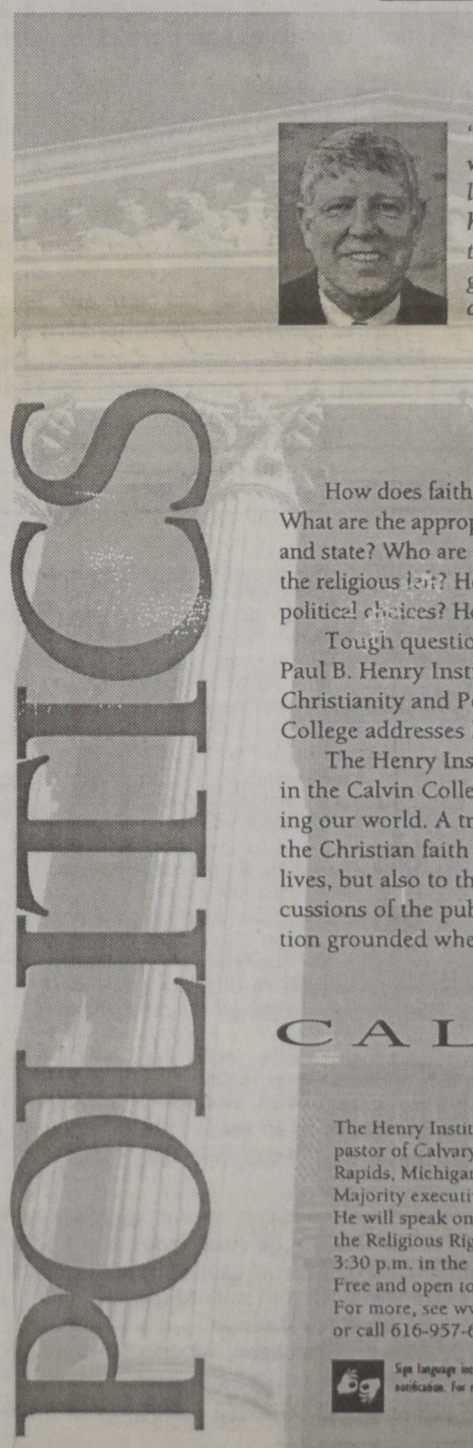
Dordt College is seeking adjunct faculty to teach graduate level education courses during July 2000, Summer term, in the field of Curriculum and Instruction and/or Educational Psychology.

Applications must be received no later than December 15, 1999.

To learn more about the position and receive application materials, qualified persons committed to a Reformed, biblical perspective and educational philosophy are encouraged to send a letter of interest that provides evidence of that commitment and a curriculum vitae to Dr. Rockne McCarthy; Dordt College; 498 4th Ave NE; Sioux Center, IA 51250-1697; facsimile: 712 722-4496; e-mail: vpaa@dordt.edu; Web site: www.dordt.edu/offices/acadaff/

Dordt College encourages the nominations and candidacies of women, minorities, and persons with disabilities.

DORDT COLLEGE
498 4th Avenue NE Sioux Center, Iowa 51250-1697



Classifieds

ADA REALTY LTD.
2011-137 Ave., Suite 404
Edmonton, AB
T5A 4W2
(403) 473-8149
Sid Vandermeulen
Contact us first when you think of moving to Edmonton and district.
Het vertrouwde adres.

The staff of Christian Courier wish you a joyful and blessed Thanksgiving in the company of friends, family and your siblings in the Lord!

Applications Accepted for Elementary Principal Position

Abbotsford Christian School, a multi-denominational school system serving over 1100 students at 3 campuses, is inviting applications for an elementary (K-7) principal at the Heritage Campus.

We are looking for an experienced and enthusiastic leader who is deeply committed to Christian education and is excited about working as part of a leadership team.

Application deadline: December 31, 1999
Please direct resumes or inquiries to:
Ed Noot, Principal
Abbotsford Christian School – Clayburn Hills Campus
3939 Old Clayburn Road, Abbotsford, BC V3G 1J9
phone: 604-850-2694 fax: 604-850-7075
e-mail: enoot@uniserve.com

The Calvin College Education Department

seeks candidates for a tenure-track position (subject to approval) starting in August, 2001. The position primarily involves teaching **reading** and **reading across the curriculum** at the undergraduate and graduate level. It is expected that all full-time faculty assume responsibilities for academic advising, curriculum development, committee service, and research and professional scholarship.

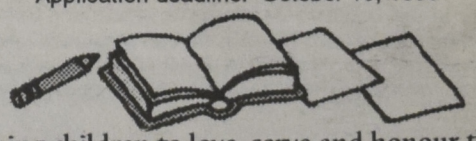
Qualifications include: ① an earned doctorate (or ABD) in reading; ② recent K-12 teaching and/or administration experience; ③ a scholarship agenda; and ④ commitment to a Reformed Christian expression of faith.

Calvin College is a Christian college within the Reformed tradition of historic Christianity and is an equal opportunity employer.
The College encourages the application of women and minority candidates.
Interested applicants should forward a letter stating qualifications and curriculum vitae to:
Dr. L. Stegink, Department Chair,
Education Department, Calvin College
3201 Burton, S.E., Grand Rapids, MI 49546 USA
by September 1, 2000.

Timothy Christian School in Barrie, Ontario
seeks a full-time
Principal/Administrator
beginning August, 2000.

We are looking for a progressive, faith-filled motivator who loves the Lord and has a passion for Christian Education.
Timothy Christian School is a thriving school with 250 students, 17 teachers and a strong interdenominational flavor.

Please direct inquiries, resume, statement of faith and philosophy of education to:
Jake Veenstra
2284 Highway 26
Minesing, Ontario L0L 1Y0
Phone: (705)722-8179
Application deadline: October 19, 1999



"Equipping children to love, serve and honour the Lord through a sound, Christ-centred education."

THE KING'S UNIVERSITY COLLEGE
Christian University Education
Faculty Position Openings

Biology
Introductory Biology, Genetics, Molecular Cell Biology, or Vertebrate Physiology and one or more of the following: Microbiology, Vertebrate Zoology, Human Anatomy and Physiology (non-majors), and Ethology.
Application Deadline: **October 22, 1999, or when filled**.

Mathematics
Introductory and intermediate Calculus and Differential Equations. Other areas of teaching responsibility include one or more of the following: Introductory Statistics, Computing Science, Linear Algebra, and foundations of mathematics. Expertise in areas of Applied Mathematics.
Application Deadline: **November 5, 1999, or when filled**.

Psychology
Personality, Abnormal, and Clinical Psychology. Additional course assignments could include one or more of Psychometrics, Cognition, Counselling, Community Psychology and History of Psychology. Clinical experience is an asset in both teaching and research.
Application Deadline: **December 10, 1999, or when filled**.

To be considered for appointment, any candidate must indicate a commitment to the Mission Statement and the Statement of Faith of the College. **Starting Date: July 1, 2000.** Starting Salary: $37,000 and up with a generous benefit package. Qualified candidates may inquire to:
Dr. S. Keith Ward, Vice President (Academic)
The King's University College
9125 - 50 Street, Edmonton, Alberta T6B 2H3
Tel: 780-465-8304; Fax: 780-465-3534
e-mail: skward@kingsu.ab.ca web: www.kingsu.ab.ca

THE KING'S UNIVERSITY COLLEGE
in Edmonton, Alberta, has an immediate opening for a
PLANNED GIVING OFFICER

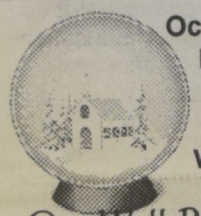
We are seeking an individual who is committed to the mission of the University College, with proven skills in fund raising, particularly in the solicitation of planned gifts. The position involves elaboration of a program for planned giving and major gift fund raising, as well as making personal visits among strong King's supporters, mostly in Western Canada.
The successful candidate will have a love for Christian education, have post-secondary education and/or experience in fund raising as well as financial and charitable estate planning, and will possess strong inter-personal and communication skills. Salary will be commensurate with experience.

Please submit resume to
Ms. Coby Benoit, Director of Development
The King's University College
9125 - 50 Street, Edmonton, AB T6B 2H3
phone: 780-465-8311 • fax: 780-465-3534
e-mail: *cbenoit@kingsu.ab.ca*
web: *www.kingsu.ab.ca*

Calendar of Events

Items appearing in this column are run free of charge if they advertise an admission-free event, if they accompany an ad for the same event, or at the discretion of CC. In case of free listing, space limitations apply. The charge otherwise is $7.50 per line, or $1.50 per line inch, per insertion.

Oct. 16	Netherlands Bazaar, Thornhill Community Centre, 7755 Bayview Ave., **Thornhill**, Ont., Free admission. 10 a.m. - 10 p.m. (#)
Oct. 16	A day of encouragement and training for deacons, elders and other caregivers, at Hamilton District Christian High School in **Ancaster**, Ont. Theme: "Refreshing our hope!" Featuring 54 workshops including special sessions for elders and caregivers. Cost: $40. Contact your deacons for a registration form, or call Diaconal Ministries at 905-646-4511. (#)
Oct. 23	"Men of Praise" Male Chorus (John Oosterink, director) in concert. Also participating: the "Clarkson CRC Choir" (Laurens Kaldeway, director). Clarkson Christian Reformed Church, 1880 Lakeshore Rd. W., **Mississauga**, Ont. 7:30 p.m. Freewill offering. For info call: 416-245-3940. •
Oct. 28	The Fifth Annual Kuyper Lecture, Economic Stewardship in a Global Context, by Dr. Bob Goudzwaard. 7:30 p.m. West Commons, Dordt College, **Sioux Center**, Iowa. Free. For more info, call 712-722-6333.
Oct. 31	Dutch Service, Ancaster CRC, Hwy. 53, **Ancaster**, Ont., 3 p.m., Rev. Jerry Hoytema. (#)
Nov. 5	Christian Festival Concert under the direction of Leendert Kooij, at Roy Thomson Hall, **Toronto**, Ont. Tickets are $25/$20/$15. Call 416-636-9779. (#)
Nov. 19-21	50th Anniversary Celebrations, **Clinton**, Ont. CRC. For more info and to reserve dinner tickets, contact Jennie at 519-482-9827, or Dick at 519-482-3431.
Nov. 27-28	50th Anniversary of Immanuel CRC, **Brampton**, Ont. Dinner, Festivities, and Commemorative Service. Contact Shirley Aukema at 905-4487 for more info.

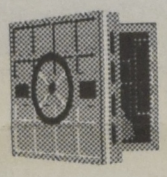


October 18

BUT IS IT STILL WARM?

Our Well-Preserved Reformed Heritage

November 1



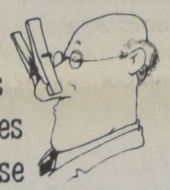
THE WELL-TENDED TALENT?

How will you use yours?

November 15

TO SMELL OR NOT TO SMELL

The blessings and curses of the nose



Questions?
Please call:
Lenie Gehrels
416-225-5217

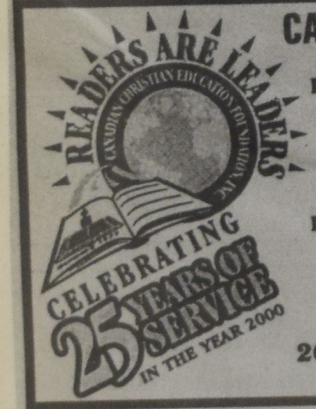
Bets Speelman
416-742-1172

Ge Spaans
905-477-1243

ADMISSION FREE

Market Place: 10 a.m. - 6 p.m.
Restaurant: 10 a.m. - 9 p.m.
Auction: 7 p.m.

You can help!
- Pea soup or Dutch baking
- Donations: 15 Pavilion St. Unionville, ON L3R 1N8



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To Students coming to McMaster University, Hamilton

For more information please contact Michael Fallon at (905) 525-9140, ext. 24123 or e-mail fallonm@mcmaster.ca

You are warmly invited to come out and meet other students and participate in Chaplaincy Centre activities.

- ✓ **Welcome BBQ**: September 16, 5:30 p.m.
- ✓ **Inaugural Chapel**: September 14, 12:30 p.m. at the Chaplaincy Centre
- ✓ **Monthly Film/Dinner Discussions**: Beginning Sept. 28.
- ✓ **Christian Fellowship Dinner**: Thursdays, 5:30 p.m. beginning Sept. 23.
- ✓ **Monthly Brown-Bag Lunch Discussions**
- ✓ **Spirituality "101" Retreat** at St. Paul's Anglican Church: Saturday, September 25, 9:30 a.m. - 7 p.m. *Pre-registration Essential!*
- ✓ **Wilderness Retreat**: Oct 1-3.

The focus of the tour will be on the Reformation. Participants will see parts of England and Scotland, their chateaux and cathedrals.

Included: Airfare, hotels and meals.

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News

Yonge Street Mission opens career clothing store, computer lab

Alan Doerksen

TORONTO – Toronto's Yonge Street Mission (YSM), one of Canada's oldest missions to street people, is launching two very modern-minded programs: a store for career clothing, and a computer literacy centre. Both are located at YSM's new facility called the Three Ten Centre (named after its address: 310 Gerrard Street East, in downtown Toronto).

Double Take is YSM's new second-hand clothing store. According to a YSM press release, the store is innovative because it has a special focus on affordable "interview and career clothing," and because it will provide employment and merchandising training for local community members whom YSM refers to as "new career candidates.". YSM plans for the store to become a self-sufficient source of revenue to fund some of the mission's programs.

The TD (Toronto Dominion) Securities Computer Literacy Centre will open this month and will focus on providing children and youth with the skills needed to compete in today's work and educational worlds. According to YSM, "Young people who live in the lower economic strata of society are virtually cut off from computer technology, and this deficit can affect their lives profoundly. Without assistance to learn and develop significant technical proficiencies, children are assured of entrapment in a hopeless tomorrow."

The computer centre aims to achieve these goals:

– Providing education for 500 children in the first three years;

– Offering computer courses for software users;

– Providing selective training in hardware service and maintenance;

– Providing opportunities for students who succeed in the educational component to take home a 486 computer for practice and improvement of their skills.

On September 9, YSM hosted a grand opening of the Three Ten Centre, which featured as the keynote speaker Ontario's Lieutenant Governor, the Honorable Hilary Weston. Barbara Hall, chair of National Strategy on Community Safety and Crime Prevention, and Kenneth Foxcroft, deputy chair of Toronto Dominion Securities, also spoke at the event.

Color printing in this issue of *Christian Courier* is made possible by the generosity of Voortman Cookies Ltd. Thanks!

News Digest

Saudi women surf the 'Net

RIYADH, Saudi Arabia (AP) – They may not be able to drive, travel on their own or appear in public without covering up from head to toe, but Saudi women can now surf the Internet. The World Wide Web has quickly become an opportunity for many women to satisfy their quest for knowledge, which has often been restricted.

"It whetted my appetite to keep up with the world," admits Salwa Al-Qunaibet, a census bureau computer operator. She was probably among the first few women to use the Internet here.

Now there is an Internet provider in Saudi Arabia with a special branch for women "surfers." The link called *Laki Anti* ("For you, lady" in Arabic) is the women's site on AwalNet, which is the only Internet provider in Saudi Arabia with such a link.

Comedy 101

TORONTO – Want to be a stand-up comic? Then take a course in comedy. College-level courses and private coaching are now available to prepare wannabe comics for a stand-up career, according to the *Toronto Star*. One example is Humber College's summer comedy workshop program, whose artistic director is Mark Breslin, CEO of the Yuk Yuk's chain of comedy clubs. Breslin believes comedians can be taught how to get more laughs."Whatever their given talent it, I think you can maximize it," he says. "I think you can cut a lot of time off their learning curve. There's a big fear factor in our business and if you can reduce this level of fear, it's a very good thing."

But stand-up comic Lawrence Morgenstern says, "My feeling is that you can't learn to be funny. I think that if you are funny, you can certainly learn other things that will broaden your horizons in the field."

Bumper crop of stickers

TORONTO – The next time you're stuck in a traffic jam, check out the bumper stickers around you. Here are some recent examples listed in the *Globe and Mail*:

"Caution: Driver legally blonde."

"Honk if you've never seen an Uzi fired from a car window."

"Cat – the other white meat."

"Money isn't everything, but it sure keeps the kids in touch."

Every child deserves to grow up loved ...

A priceless gift ...

That your children will treasure forever ...

That will give them a head start in life ...

That will warm them in later years ...

A special gift only YOU can give them ...

The gift of your loving marriage.

and parents who are in love have twice as much to give.

Attend a **Reformed Marriage Encounter** Weekend!
October 15-17 at the Otonabee Inn in Peterborough
or
November 5-7 at the Days Inn in Vineland.
For information, call Jamie & Wilma Kulyk at **(905) 987-4272.**

For 30 years, Worldwide Marriage Encounter has been helping *good* marriages become *great* marriages. Spend a weekend with us and discover what *3 million+ couples and their families* have experienced - intimate communication, forgiveness, and commitment.

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